# VALLEY VOICE

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TRMC's unfinished tower. Nancy Vigran/Valley Voice

## Grand Jury Report 'Tower of Shame' Strikes at Tulare Regional

**Dave Adalian**

Already locked in a scandalous and expensive legal battle regarding the sudden and unannounced replacement of the medical staff at Tulare Regional Medical Center, directors of the Tulare Local Health Care District (TLHCD) last week found themselves the target of a damning report by the Tulare County Grand Jury.

Entitled *Tower of Shame*, the report accuses the District of serious and perhaps willful misconduct and incompetence in construction of the vastly over-budget, years-late Phase I Tower Project. Primarily, the report finds that the TLHCD Board of Directors withheld critical information from its Bond Oversight Committee about how they spent $85 million in taxpayer-approved bonds beginning in 2007. The Board, the report said, appears to have "routinely circumvented" laws requiring disclosure to the public as well, failing to inform constituents where their money was being spent.

Also among the findings listed in the report, which the Grand Jury took the unusual step of releasing months ahead its annual report, was the accusation the TLHCD Board "intentionally or unintentionally" misrepresented the District's ability to cover the gap between the $85 million in bonds it requested from the public and "the total project cost estimated to be well in excess of $100 million." The Board, the Grand Jury found, appeared to justify its wishful thinking with unsupported estimates of the District's reserves and unrealistic projections of its future earnings.

### Hospital Still Tight-Lipped

Now that the Grand Jury has released its report, the TLHCD Board has 90 days to file an official response. What they might say is anyone's guess, as the Board and its representatives have chosen to continue their silence despite a written request from The *Valley Voice* for an interview with TLHCD Board Chairwoman Sherrie Bell and Dr. "Benny" Benzeevi, CEO for Health Care Conglomerate Associates (HCCA), which operates TRMC and is tasked with completing the Tower Project.

The Grand Jury, too, ran into resistance during the course of its seven-month investigation into the TLHCD Board's conduct.

"We worked hard on this one," said Grand Jury Foreman Chuck White. "It was a fight all the way."

White said the District's recalcitrance with the Bond Oversight Committee and the public continued during its dealings with the Grand Jury, and their representatives presented a difficult attitude.

"I felt that they were not forthcoming," he said, "like they were above everybody."

### Careful, Thorough Investigation

The Grand Jury's investigation included detailed interviews and extensive review of more than a decade's worth of records.

"We interviewed at least a half dozen people. We interviewed several members of the board of the Tulare Local Health Care District and several members of the Bond Oversight Committee," said Grand Juror John Hobbs, who headed the committee that investigated TLHCD. "Those interviews plus, I have to say, what the public doesn't see is all the research that has to be done."

The District did not give up its archive easily.

"We ended up subpoenaing a lot of documents from their attorneys in Los Angeles," said Hobbs. "Those documents lie at the heart of our investigation. We gleaned a lot of things from them, not the least of which were the number of change orders ... that increased the budget by $17.5 million."

More than 700 change orders were issued during early work on the Tower Project. Later, 9.29% of the $85 million in bond funding would be spent in a court-ordered settlement with the construction firm originally contracted to build the expansion. All this, the Grand Jury found, happened against a background of tumultuous turnover at the highest levels of hospital administration, distracting the Board from the Tower Project, leading to further delays and added costs.

Thankfully, a quirk of fate aided the investigation immensely.

"I was very lucky. One of the jury members spent a career working for the

**SHAME** continued on **11 »**

## Hanford Council Votes in Favor of Rubber Surfacing for Endless Dreams Playground

**Nancy Vigran**

In a unanimous vote at the April 5 City Council meeting, Hanford councilmembers chose to listen to their constituents and voted in favor of having the Endless Dreams playground area resurfaced in rubber as opposed to a wood fiber finish, which had previously been approved by the Recreations & Parks Commission and voted upon by council.

Workers at the playground, located in Freedom Park at 9 ¼ Avenue and E. Leland Way, began tearing up the old, worn rubber material in early March, as formerly approved by council. Residents took notice and immediately began protesting the move.

Two days later staff had work come to a halt after hearing many protests from Hanford residents.

At the following March 15 council meeting, several residents spoke during the public comment period, opposing wood fiber and requesting council to reconsider the rubber alternative, which will cost more.

Chris Soares said that the rubber material is easier for children with limited mobility to move around on, than wood chips. As a former fundraiser for the original playground equipment in the park, which was completed in 2007, she is adamant that it remain accessible to all children.

Others also spoke up in favor of the city spending the extra dollars to shy away from wood chipping and again utilize rubber material for everyone's benefit.

When Endless Dreams became a possible realty as the larger picture, Freedom Park, was beginning to materialize, the Endless Dreams Trust was set up for donations to a playground equipped for all children of all ages, with and without disabilities. Soares was the instigator of that trust. Nearly $100,000 was donated to help the city pay for the close to $400,000 spent on the playground within the park, according to staff reports.

Following the March 15 council meeting, Soares set up an online petition at change.org, asking council to

**PLAYGROUND** continued on **10 »**

Devin Nunes and Ambassador Juan Carlos Pinzon. Catherine Doe/Valley Voice

## Colombian Ambassador Pinzon Visits Nunes, Tulare County

**Catherine Doe**

The Ambassador of Colombia to the United States was Congressman Nunes' special guest to Tulare County March 29 and 30. Ambassador Juan Carlos Pinzon was appointed to his current post eight months ago, but had met Nunes years before through the US Intelligence Committee. Pinzon was the former Deputy Secretary of Defense of Colombia and the former chief of staff for Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos.

Pinzon spent his first day in Tulare County touring Sequoia National Park and met with park Superintendent Woody Smeck. Pinzon remarked how "Sequoia National Park is a must see for every human being in the world."

He said Tulare County was "so blessed to have the oldest and largest thing in the world," referring to the Giant Sequoias, and the number one agriculture region in the world, all in one county.

The next day Nunes took the ambassador on a southern Tulare County circuit, driving through Tulare, Poplar, Porterville, Strathmore and Lindsay, with a stop at Setton Farms in Terra Bella to tour a pistachio grove. The group ended their afternoon at Cafe Lafayette in Exeter to have lunch with Exeter's Mayor Robyn Stearns and participate in a media round table.

After lunch Pinzon discussed the deep friendship between the United States and Colombia. The Free Trade

**AMBASSADOR** continued on **5 »**

FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

# The First Thing We Do

I'm fairly certain you know how this famous Shakespearean line ends; if not, Google it. I am--with no small irony--misappropriating it for my own purposes.

I'd like to apologize for the fact that the delivery of our 17 March edition--Erin go bragh--was, for a few hours, postponed. It was my doing.

I had been receiving threatening emails from a Los Angeles attorney whose clients were displeased with a prominent story in that issue. We made some corrections online that were requested--corrections that we at the *Valley Voice* are ever only too happy to make--but the print copy had already been put to bed.

The attorney demanded a full retraction.

I told him that he surely could not expect me to squelch an edition of the paper merely on his say-so.

"That," he replied, "is exactly what I expect."

So I telephoned our distributor, asking him, as another attorney put it, "to take a coffee break."

The next four hours or so were spent in fevered consultation with two attorneys on our end of the spectrum: Could they go after our personal assets and, more to the point, was there any actionable language in the article?

Anyone can sue anyone in our litigious culture, and not necessarily with justice as an aspiration. In our case, I surmised that any potential lawsuit would quite nakedly serve as a fulcrum to break us in that it could be quite lengthy--and therefore, obviously, expensive. Prohibitively so.

Now, the larger newspapers--especially those in corporate groups--can weather this sort of thing. I don't imagine there are many papers the size of the *Valley Voice* that can. And the attorney threatening me knew that very well.

It was at this juncture that our secret weapon revealed himself. It was reassuring when one of the attorneys we consulted read the article and could find no actionable language, but it was quite satisfying--and we were grateful--when he offered to take the case.

So I telephoned our distributor, pulling the trigger.

If this hiccough caused a delay in anyone's receiving the paper, I apologize. I was steering some treacherous shoals, the navigation of which required the four hours aforementioned, but I'm glad we got it out on the street.

True, this pause cost us money in terms of distributing--but I suppose this is the price of responsibility. I did not feel that I could just blithely publish without the benefit of counsel.

Still, I did deliberately send forth an article I knew to contain inaccuracies. These, however, were of a minor nature and, to my mind, tangential to the feature. Substantively, I yet believe the article merited publishing. The readers were given access to an important story and, if flawed, it was well written and true in a big-picture sense.

I have yet to receive anything in the mail from the Los Angeles attorney. And I hope never to. It may be that he shot his bolt at threat making, and it may be, conversely, that even now the legal wheels are being ground behind the scenes against us.

We'll see. Two things are certain: We will continue to report on the story that apparently disjointed so many noses, and I will relay to the public any attempt--by anyone--to foil our free press.

Because it's more than the fact that our newspaper is offered free to readers within our bailiwick. It's more than the fact that we're online--again, gratis--to readers in 89 countries and 35 US states and territories. Those with disjointed noses comprise a public entity, and it is our duty to report on such things. More than that, it's our right.

If you don't believe me, you can take it from the First Amendment:

*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.*

*— Joseph Oldenbourg*

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**Publisher/Editor**: Joseph Oldenbourg (joseph@ourvalleyvoice.com)
(559) 972-7778

**Associate Editor**: Nancy Vigran (nancy@ourvalleyvoice.com)

**Reporters:**
Catherine Doe (catherine@ourvalleyvoice.com)
Dave Adalian (dave@ourvalleyvoice.com)
Stefan Barros — sports (stefan@ourvalleyvoice.com)
**Production/Website**: Tony Maldonado – tony@ourvalleyvoice.com

**Sales:**
Nancy Vigran (nancy@ourvalleyvoice.com)
**Contact us & share your opinion:** www.ourvalleyvoice.com
PO Box 44064 • Lemon Cove, CA 93244

# Political Fix

Catherine Doe

## Why are Walnut Trees in Political Fix?

Visalia City Council just voted April 4 to appropriate $105,000 to plant walnut trees in the city's Scenic Corridor. This is in addition to the $58,000 that has already been spent. There are very good reasons to plant walnut trees in Visalia's Scenic Corridor and there are some very good reasons not to plant them on this parcel. But that's not why this issue landed in Political Fix. It landed in this column because, first, we ran out of space in the paper, and second, the process by which the decision came about made me mad.

First let's put to bed the arguments for and against planting the trees that were originally presented publically March 21.

The Scenic Corridor was established to maintain the agriculture roots of Visalia and to create an attractive entrance into the city. On a beautiful spring day, I almost see what Councilmember Greg Collins sees, but for the rest of the year, it just another highway interchange with commercial buildings, houses and some sad looking oak trees.

The parcel in question is 17 acres that the city owns on the north side of Highway 198 in the general area of Hillsdale Avenue and Preston Street. Six of those acres lay in the 200-foot conservation setback which is the Scenic Corridor. Councilmember Collins said that the initial plan was to put in ornamental landscaping in the setback which is very expensive to maintain. Conversely, planting walnut trees would provide the city a revenue stream. Then, after 25 or 30 years for the life of the trees, the property would be even more valuable. The city could then revisit the subject of selling the 11 acres that are not part of the Scenic Corridor.

Councilman Warren Gubler's argument against planting walnut trees was that it would take 15 years to see a return on the city's $177,000 investment, and that the rate of return was small. In addition he said, "This is not our core purpose as a city, to be farmers." The property is surrounded on two sides by residential and as part of the General Plan the city could easily rezone it as such. Residential property sells for $70,000 to $100,000 an acre and ag land sells for $30,000 an acre. "So planting walnut trees is a step backwards," said Mr. Gubler.

"This is a million dollar asset being mishandled. We should not be asking residents to pay more taxes when the city is sitting on a parcel that has been labeled as excess property and should be sold."

At the end of the discussion the vote was 3-2 against appropriating the $105,000 to plant the trees. Mr. Collins and Mayor Steve Nelsen voted in favor and councilmembers Link, Gulber and Shuklian voted against.

Mayor Nelsen inquired how the city could vote against planting the trees when a contract with a farmer has already been signed and $58,000 has already been spent. To which Mike Olmos, Visalia City Manager, responded that the council had made the decision to plant the trees during closed session last year and that actually "the appropriation of money has to happen in a public setting."

Hmmm. What's that you say? A public setting?

The question for me wasn't if we plant walnuts, ornamental plants or an opium field. The question became why was $58,000 appropriated to level the land, put in irrigation and buy the trees before it was discussed publicly?

To make matters worse, at the next meeting on March 28, Councilmember Bob Link changed his vote from against planting the trees to "yes." He did not vote in favor of planting the trees because of a change of heart, but because he didn't want the city to lose its initial $58,000 investment – money that should not have been appropriated in the first place without public discussion.

To make matters even worse, everything had been decided in closed session in a June 1, 2015 meeting. The first time public discussion happened on March 21, of what would add up to be $177,000 of taxpayer money, the item was buried on page 7 of the mid-term budget report and discussed during a work session where few if any public ever attend.

Closed session is used when the council needs to discuss a real estate transaction, legal action or personnel issue. Technically, planting the walnut trees qualified but it certainly wasn't necessary. Just because an item qualifies to be put on the closed session agenda does not mean that city staff or the council should do it.

The only reason this issue came to light was through Mr. Gubler's insistence. He was not pleased that the decisions were being made behind closed doors, which also prevented him from discussing it. This is an example of the "Government knowing better than the private sector, and I don't believe that is true," he said.

## Open up Your Wallet, the Government is Coming

Talking about taxes, when the Visalia City Council was debating putting a sales tax measure on the ballot it knew that it would have lots of competition. The Kaweah Delta Health Care District has to float a bond measure to pay for earthquake retrofitting, and College of Sequoia's was also considering putting a bond on the ballot. Tulare Regional Medical Center needs to put up a bond measure on the ballot to finish its tower.

I was curious to see if the four entities would collude somehow and separate the measures between the June and November ballots so the voting public wouldn't freak out. That ended up to not be necessary as COS did not pursue a bond measure and TRMC has not yet started the paperwork. TRMC sorely needs the money to finish the hospital's tower--it looks finished, but is actually just a shell. But no TRMC bond has a chance of passing until they get a hospital board the citizens of Tulare can trust and which will be transparent and be good money managers.

The resulting election still means that Visalians are getting a double whammy to their pocket books. A measure to increase sales tax in Visalia by a half cent will be on the November ballot. The new tax only needs to pass with 50% of the vote.

The Kaweah Delta Health Care District decided to try its luck with a mail-in ballot called Measure H. Ballots for Measure H were to be mailed out April 4 and need to be mailed back in May 3. Measure H needs a two-thirds majority to pass.

## I'm Sorry, I Must Have Misunderstood

By the time the 50 states and six territories have all voted in their primaries, Republicans will have cast 30 million votes. What weight will the people's voice carry in picking the Republican Presidential nominee?

Apparently none.

The Republican Convention rules concerning picking a nominee will not be settled until the current delegates are seated at the convention. Once the delegates are seated they vote on a set of rules that dictate how the convention will pick the Republican Presidential nominee. Until that time, no one knows what those criteria will be. This means that Mr. Trump, Mr. Cruz, Mr. Kasich, or even Mr. Romney could be chosen as the Republican Presidential Candidate.

It is a forgotten fact that, in the end, it is the convention delegates who award a candidate the nomination for president. There is no law that says delegates can't do whatever they want, given that a majority of them vote to do it. Depending on how the rules are written for the Republican Convention in Cleveland, the delegates could deny the front runner the nomination.

While the anti-Trump campaign has been working double time to ensure he does not get the 1237 delegates needed to get the nomination, Mr. Trump says that riots will erupt if the Republican establishment does not follow the will of the voters

But none of this hyperbole seems to matter.

In a report from the *Brookings Institute* it said, "When there are deep splits inside the Party, accompanied by a wide-spread belief that the front-runner coming into the convention is weak and almost sure to lose in November, convention rules start going out the window."

How could that be when in 2012 a presidential nominee had to have won eight states to even be considered for the nomination?

That was 2012. This is 2016.

A member of the rules committee for the Republican convention told CNBC that "political parties, not voters, choose their presidential nominees. The media has created the perception that the voters choose the nomination. That's the conflict here,"

This is true. In 1952, Governor of California, Earl Warren, didn't even participate in the primaries but was the chosen candidate of the California delegation to the Republican convention. My grandmother, Florence Doe, was a delegate at that convention and cast her first "test" ballot for Gov. Warren, along with the entire California delegation. He was the third highest vote getter on the straw vote but at the last minute instructed his delegates to vote for General Ike Eisenhower. The delegates obliged and Gen. Eisenhower won the nomination.

In those days it was well understood that king makers and The Party picked the nominee - not the voters. In fact, the voters don't even pick the delegates. The party picks them also.

To take it further, voters don't even choose their president. President Bush never did win the popular vote. He was president because he won the electoral vote. Vice President Al Gore won the popular vote in the 2000 election, and Senator John Kerry won the popular vote in 2004.

One person, one vote doesn't hold for the United States Congress either. The Democrats won a million more votes than Republicans, but because of gerrymandering, Republicans won more house seats and now are the majority. It was a strategy they worked on since the 2010 census to get as many local Republicans elected as possible so they could redraw the congressional districts in Republicans' favor.

So if the American voter doesn't pick the delegates, the presidential nominee or the president, where does that leave United States Democracy?

Why do we bother holding primaries?

"That's a very good question," said a member of the Republican Rules Committee.

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# Phil Cox and Amy Shuklian Debate at District 3 Forum in Visalia

**Catherine Doe**

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce put on its second candidates' forum of this election season between Visalia Councilmember Amy Shuklian and incumbent Tulare County Supervisor Phil Cox. The two candidates are running for Tulare County Supervisor District 3, which encompasses most of Visalia.

Gail Zurek, president of the Visalia Chamber of Commerce, started the forum off by asking what each of them can bring to the community as supervisor. Cox started by saying the county is moving ahead at light speed. He said that he is running to see several projects the county is working on get finished and to ensure that the county continues moving forward. Those projects include a couple of new jails, a new vocational education building, and buying the Cigna Building that will supply the space needs of the county for the next 10-20 years.

Cox said, "It takes some continuity, takes some knowledge of what is going on."

Cox stated that he is very fiscally conservative and that "my board does not like debt. They do not like to borrow money to pay for things that we can save for and pay for up front. "

"Fiscal responsibility is very important to the city council, and very important to me," said Shuklian in response to Zurek's question.

During the recession Visalia's $13 million in reserves was depleted to $1.3 million, but the city still managed to balance the budget without laying off personnel. Visalia now has $8 million in reserves and the council is looking to get it back up to 35% of the General Fund.

Shuklian said that some of the city council's accomplishments during the last few years have included rehabilitating blighted and foreclosed properties throughout Visalia using grant money. The city also just had a groundbreaking for the Visalia Emergency Communication Center to replace the current facility located in a city building's basement.

Shuklian said she also will continue working on luring higher education opportunities that are public and affordable to the youth of Tulare County. Right now Visalia only has private four-year institutions.

Her career in politics started by getting two dog parks built in Visalia.

She said, "You can make a difference on the local level especially in a town like Visalia and a county like Tulare."

Shuklian won a city council seat in 2007 and in 2011 was reelected and served as mayor for two years.

"The greatest experience that I have had is representing Visalia as its mayor," she said.

"Politics is not my career, I have worked the last 30 years in health industry," she said. "Local politics should not be a career. It should be a service to your community and what I have done for last eight-and-a-half years."

She said she was born in District 3 and raised on the family farm "doing everything you do as a farm kid."

She said she is excited about the opportunity to represent the farmers she knew as a young girl and grew up with.

Zurek's next question was how to balance between being a fiscal conservative and spending money to solve the county's problems.

Shuklian said that Visalia's reserve is what got the city through the recession.

"But you have to solve problems now and can't let assets sit around and deteriorate," she said.

One of those assets that were deteriorating was Visalia's animal control facility. She said that Visalia recently completed its new animal control facility and got it built under budget.

"I liken animal control right up there with public safety," she said.

Cox jumped right in and said, "I would never say that animal control is equal to public safety, you can contract for that service. Knowing I would have to go into debt to build something, I would have taken my dispatchers out of the basement and built a dispatch center first, before building the animal control. I would have taken care of my people first and then the animals."

Liz Wynn, director of Visalia Emergency Aid Council, asked what they planned on doing as far as economic development to help the 22% Tulare County residents who live in poverty.

Cox replied that despite what has been said, the county works with the cities better today, than it has for decades. He said that the county formed an economic development focus team after the county parted company with the ineffective Tulare County Economic Development Agency last year. The county's team meets with corporations interested in investing in the area, and if the county does not have the land they need, it directs them to the city that does. The county makes sure they are working hand in hand with the cities in assisting them to bring in large employers into their communities.

Phil Cox and Amy Shuklian at Cafe 210.

"Rising water lifts all boats," he said.

Shuklian countered by saying that she was running because there has not been collaboration between the city and county and, "I would like to see that change." She said that right now the biggest thing the city is working on is getting Nordstrom to build in Visalia rather than Fresno. With 1,800 jobs at stake, members of the chamber came to speak along with city mayors and other residents of the industrial park including Jo-Ann's to tell Nordstrom what a great place this is to do business.

"At that meeting our room was packed, but there was no one from the county," she said.

Cox responded by saying that, "I'm sorry that Amy is out of the loop. The county was asked to not publicly participate." He said that the county negotiated directly with Nordstrom in connection with Visalia's city manager. "This information was not passed onto the city council and I apologize. Nordstrom did not want to make this a public forum."

Amy countered, "I was informed. That deal was made after the fact," or after the city council meeting referenced above where it ended up voting on increasing incentives to draw Nordstrom to Visalia.

John Rogers, a local farmer, asked about how supervisors get their raises. Cox said that the supervisors' raises are linked to the top three administrative county jobs. When the board of supervisors votes for the top three administrators to get a raise, the board gets a raise. He said he feels it is not an ideal system.

"The Consumer Price Index has been 2-3% increase a year whereas the boards' increase has been about 1%," he said.

The pay for a supervisor is about $100,000 a year.

Cox said that he went from a 60- to 80-hour work week owning two businesses before being elected, to working a similar 60- to 80-hour work week as a Tulare County Supervisor. He ended up closing both of his businesses "because being a supervisor is a challenging job that requires full time. Otherwise you aren't doing it justice," he said.

Shuklian said that she didn't think that an elected official should vote on their own raises, and that for Tulare County, $100,000 is a lot of money.

"When I started my salary was at $800 a month. It was at that time that we were asking employees for a 4% take back, so I took 4% off my salary. I know it's not a lot but I did it as a symbolic gesture. I am the lowest paid city council member. I'm not a city council member for $800 a month folks, I'm doing it because I care about the community," she said.

"I've never taken a raise. I've never taken the city's insurance. I don't turn in receipts when I meet with folks and have lunches," she said.

Shuklian was asked, if elected supervisor, would she discontinue the county's suit against the SEIU employees that is costing the county $100,000's.

Shuklian's response was, "I'm sure it is and I'm sure I can't."

She reminded the audience that there will still be three other members on the board after the election, who did vote to sue their employees.

"It is very costly and I don't think it is good for morale to sue your own employees, but I don't think I have the power to stop that," she said.

Cox countered by saying, "Let me educate you. We did not sue our employees."

He said that the TCBOS filed a complaint with the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB). The complaint was based on bad behavior by the SEIU negotiators during employee contract negotiations. SEIU has filed seven cases against the county and the TCBOS has filed one against them. Cox reiterated that the complaint is not costing $100,000's.

"We have on some [legal cases], but not this" he said.

To close the forum Zurek asked both candidates to give one word that would describe themselves for supervisor. Shuklian said "committed" and Cox said his word would be "accountability."

Because of the large number of candidates there will be two more forums for District 1. The Exeter Chamber of Commerce will be hosting a forum on Thursday, April 20 at the Exeter Memorial Building from 6-8pm.

On Wednesday, May 4, the *Valley Voice*, the *Foothills Sun-Gazette* and the Exeter Republican Women Federated will host a form also in the Exeter Memorial Building from 5:30 – 8pm. Refreshments will be served and questions from the audience are invited.

# County CAO Presents Mid-Year Budget Report to Board of Supervisors

Tulare County Administrative Officer (CAO), Michael Spata, presented the Mid-Year Budget Report for Fiscal Year 2015/16 to the Board of Supervisors during a recent regularly scheduled meeting.

"The county is in a strong financial condition," stated Spata. "Both the reserves and the general fund balances are adequately financed."

The Mid-Year Budget Report highlighted and listed the county's commitment to public safety and security, economic well-being, and quality of life for Tulare County residences. It also depicted the importance of organizational performance.

Currently, the county's General Fund budget has a balance of $29 million, with $25 million in reserves. The Board of Supervisors emphasized the need to continue efforts to increase county reserves in the coming years.

With its conservative approach to budgeting, the county was able during mid-year, to continue efforts in increasing public safety by providing $625,000 to departmental budgets; with a bulk of those funds allocated to the Sheriff's Department for technological improvements.

"Moving forward, the county will ensure that its budget will be able to deliver effective public service on a sustainable basis," shared Spata.

For the remainder of the fiscal year, Tulare County will concentrate on strategic management and economic development to deliver more efficient and effective service to its residents.

Following the report presentation, Board Chairman Mike Ennis commended county staff and departments for an excellent Mid-Year Budget Report, keeping in line with Board priorities.

## DA Swears In New Investigators, Prosecutors

On March 31, Tulare County District Attorney Tim Ward administered oaths of office to six new prosecutors and five criminal investigators during a ceremony held at the Tulare County Board of Supervisors chambers in Visalia.

Prosecutors Paula Clark, Christina Cornejo, Eric Wang, Katrina Newcomb, James Voge and Diva Aziz recited their oaths in front of family, friends, and fellow members of the Office of the District Attorney.

The addition of these six new prosecutors, who will be assigned to prosecutorial divisions and office locations throughout Tulare County, creates a staff of 61 attorneys.

The District Attorney's Bureau of Investigations welcomed investigators Donald Deeds, Gregg Barnes, Rodney Klassen, Katherine Garcia and David Gosvenor to its professional ranks. The Bureau comprises of 40 sworn peace officer positions, making it one of the largest law enforcement agencies in Tulare County.

# Former Tulare Police Chief Jerry Breckinridge Gets Top Job in Arvin

**Catherine Doe**

Less than a year after allegedly being pulled over for drunk driving, former Tulare Police Chief Jerry Breckinridge was chosen as the police chief in Arvin. In a 4-1 vote by Arvin City Council on March 15, he was appointed its new chief.

His first official day of work was April 4. Breckinridge's salary will be $135,000 including benefits, with a possible 10 percent increase the first year based on performance.

Arvin Mayor Jose Flores abstained from voting but did not say why. Previously, Flores objected to spending thousands of dollars to hire a consulting company to conduct a national search for a new police chief that yielded 12 candidates. Flores was in support of appointing acting chief Sergeant Jerry Martinez, according to KBAK Eyewitness News.

According to KBAK reporting, Flores said, "I definitely opposed it, because we were going to spend thousands of dollars we could better use in the city," said Flores.

Breckinridge was one of two finalists for the job with the other candidate being Harold Turner of Indianapolis, Indiana.

KBAK reported that some Arvin residents "appeared to be troubled by the City Council giving serious consideration to the former Tulare police chief taking over the reins of the police department in Arvin."

Questions about Breckinridge's past came to light about a week before the matter came before the city council. KBAK, out of Bakersfield, learned before the city council's vote about his arrest for domestic abuse involving his girlfriend, and his leave of absence as Tulare Police Chief due to an alleged drunk driving incident in May of 2015.

Charges were dropped concerning domestic abuse due to lack of evidence. Tulare City officials still will not divulge why Breckinridge was put on administrative leave for eight months before he finally resigned. Breckinridge isn't talking either.

During an interview with Eyewitness News KBAK Breckinridge said, "It's been a journey."

When asked about his past job performance. He said that the reasons for his resignation from the Tulare Police Department were a personal issue and that he wanted to leave it a personal issue.

When KBAK Eyewitness News asked Arvin City Councilman Jose Gurrola if Breckinridge was a good fit for the city of Arvin there was a long and uncomfortable pause, "I'm not going to answer that," he said. "Anything that inhibits a person's ability to lead a police department or provide for public safety is an issue," he said later in the interview.

Councilwoman Jazmin Robles said during an interview with KBAK, "We as council members have fully vetted Mr. Breckinridge, and I am confident that there is nothing in the way of him doing his job. We were voted to do the right thing and not what may be popular because of what the media is putting out there."

The Tulare Police Department and city officials lauded Breckinridge for his performance as their police chief at the time of his resignation. According to past reports, Arvin has experienced hardships in retaining police officers.

When it came time to vote, Gurrola voted in favor of appointing Breckinridge, saying, "He meets all the requirements to be a peace officer in the State of California. We did an extensive background check."

Breckinridge started with Tulare police on 1989, when he was hired as a police officer, following his military service in the Air Force. He was then selected as Tulare police chief in 2009 and held that position for nearly six years.

City officials say Arvin's police force is down to 11 officers, and three more are in the process of leaving. Mayor Jose Flores says fixing the issue is a top priority. Flores says low salaries and lack of advancement within the department is causing low retention. He says officers haven't gotten a raise since 2009 because of union negotiations, according to KGET Bakersfield.

According to the website, Transparent California, in 2013 Arvin police officers made about $45,000, while Bakersfield police officers made about $65,000. According to the City of Arvin's webpage the median income is $34,000 and the population is 93% Hispanic.

Besides the high turnover rate Kern County's is considered America's deadliest police. According to the *Guardian*, police in Kern County have killed more people per capita than in any other American county in 2015. In all, 13 people have been killed so far this year by law enforcement officers in Kern County which has a population of just under 875,000.

"During the same period, nine people were killed by the NYPD across the five counties of New York City, where almost 10 times as many people live and about 23 times as many sworn law enforcement officers patrol." according to the *Guardian*.

# Ambassador

Continued from p. 1

Agreement went into effect in 2012 and the two countries have been working collaboratively since 1999 to disarm the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). FARC started out in 1964 as a revolutionary movement to over throw the dictatorship, but by the 1980's had devolved into a drug and arms smuggling enterprise not much different from the country's drug cartels.

At one time the United States feared Colombia may disintegrate into a failed state because of its civil war and the loss of control over large swaths of land. Pinzon said the security of Colombia was a major factor in the United States' offering to partner with leaders of Colombia to combat FARC and the drug cartels.

Pinzon said the United States provided the air support and intelligence, while the Colombians provided the hardware and boots on the ground to fight FARC. What started 15 years ago between the two countries as Plan Colombia, in 1999, is now Peace Colombia since 2015. According to Pinzon, by attacking FARC's leadership and cutting their financing, it has been reduced to 30%, and the on-going peace talks are projected to lead to its complete disarmament.

The same model is now being implemented in Mexico to fight its drug cartels. Using its experience with FARC, Colombia has trained 24,000 police around the world on how to fight terrorism, with half being in Latin America.

"Intelligence is everything," said Pinzon.

Pinzon related that Colombia's peace dividend has transformed the country into one of the most dynamic democracies in Latin America.

"Colombia has cut is poverty rate in half and economic growth has even surpassed that of the United States," he said.

Through this transition, the government has been able to take back control of the previously occupied territory and expand its agriculture production. Pinzon said that 70% of the flowers in the United States come from Colombia. It also produces the best coffee in the world. The goal for Colombia is to replace drug production with agriculture production and to better reach international markets.

What has impressed him about Tulare County the most is seeing successful farming enterprises at all levels, from small farms to industrial farms, all using the latest technology to reach world markets, he said.

"The transformation of Colombia is a great success story and it happened with the collaboration with the United States," he said. "I feel like everywhere I go I tell the same story but everywhere I go people have never heard it."

After Pinzon's roundtable with the media, the group was off to California Dairies Incorporated in the Visalia Industrial Park. Pinzon's final evening was to be spent back in Tulare for dinner with Mayor David Macedo, where Nunes was hoping Pinzon could end his visit to Tulare County with the Mayor's renowned barbeque.

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# Agriculture

# CVP Water Supplies to Remain Constricted

**Kate Campbell, CFBF**

Severely limited irrigation water supplies for many San Joaquin Valley farmers will continue during the 2016 growing season, based on a 5 percent federal water allocation. Up from zero in 2014 and 2015, the meager supply estimate for Westside growers this crop year holds little promise for increased food supplies in one of the world's most productive agricultural regions.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which operates the Central Valley Project, cited the combined effect of four years of drought, lack of available water at the beginning of the 2016 water year, requirements for in-delta water quality standards and pumping restrictions to protect endangered fish species for the lack of stored agricultural water that can be allocated to customers south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

San Luis Reservoir, a shared federal-state facility that plays a key role in south-of-delta supplies, remains at about half of its 2 million acre-foot capacity, only slightly more water than last October when the official water year ended.

Representatives of farmers who rely on the CVP criticized the system's managers for not storing more water from runoff spawned by strong winter storms.

"We haven't been able to operate our existing system to take best advantage of storms when they arrive, which leaves us even more vulnerable to the next dry year," California Farm Bureau Federation President Paul Wenger said. "One thing is clear: What's happening now isn't working for fish and it isn't working for people."

Wenger said Farm Bureau will continue to press for "improved flexibility in both our water system and the regulations that govern it."

USBR officials confirmed this week that federal water storage in San Luis Reservoir, which is used to supply agricultural contractors south of the delta, stands at about 411,000 acre-feet. Of that amount, water experts estimated that 250,000 acre-feet of water is privately owned and not available for contract supply. That leaves about 160,000 acre-feet available for all federal contractors, including agricultural water districts.

In times of critical shortage, municipal and industrial users receive first priority. In addition, the bureau borrowed about 250,000 acre-feet of water from the state in 2015 to help protect fisheries and provide priority water to municipal and industrial contractors south of the delta. Payback of "loaned" water from the state last year will be made incrementally as adequate supplies are available.

Officials cited pumping restrictions to protect salmon and delta smelt during the 2015-16 water year for the current lack of stored water.

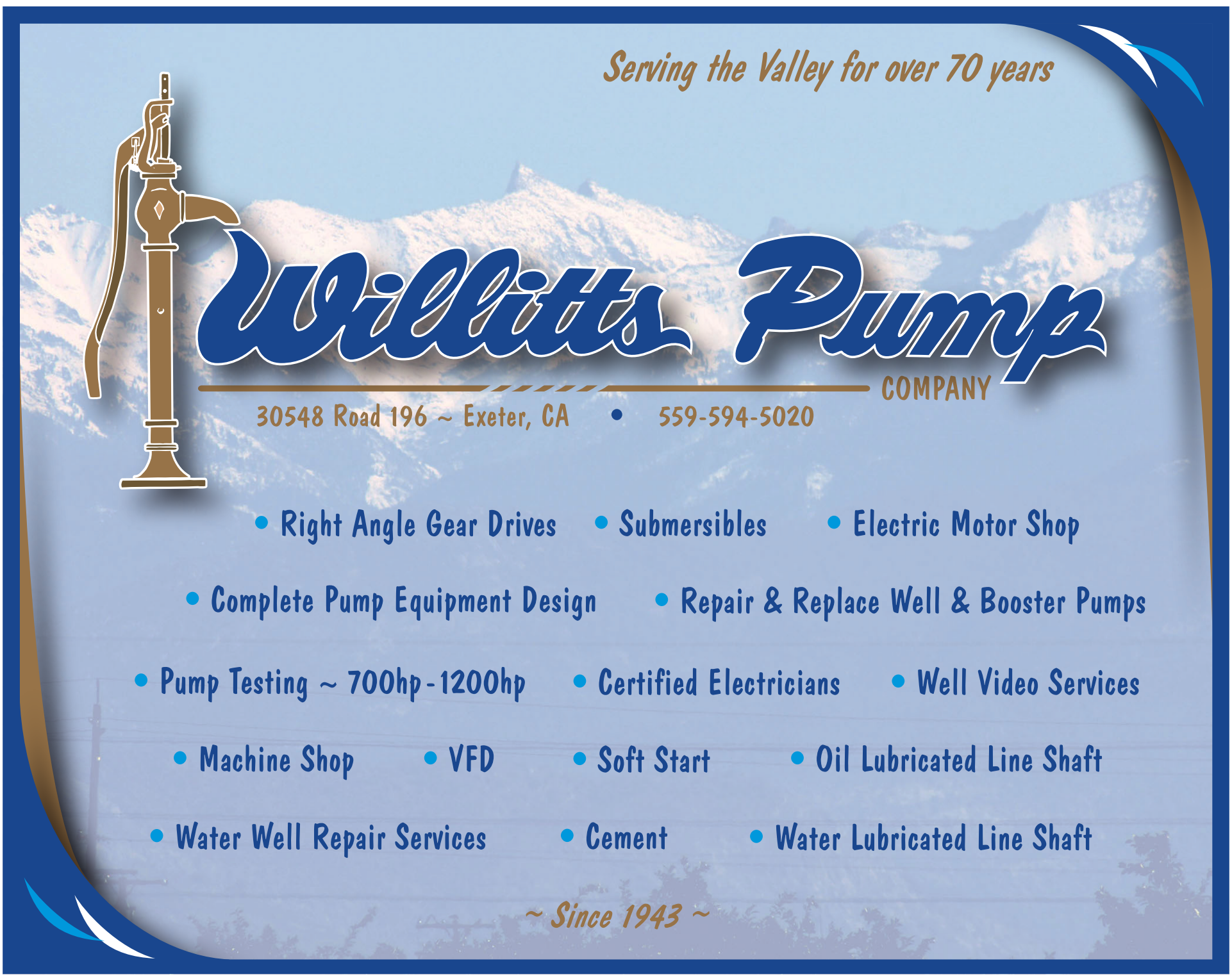
Winter precipitation has transformed the appearance of Lake Shasta. Photo on left shows the lake on Jan. 10, 2014; photo on right was taken on March 27 of this year. Improved reservoir storage has helped water supplies for many, but farmers south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta learned last week they can still expect only 5 percent of contract supplies from the federal Central Valley Project.Courtesy/Cheri Harrison/CFBF

"While we are on track for near-average precipitation this year, the ongoing and residual impacts of the multi-year drought continue," USBR Mid-Pacific Regional Director David Murillo said. "As the water year progresses, changes in hydrology and opportunities to deliver additional water will influence future allocations."

Improved precipitation during the just-concluded winter did improve allocations for other CVP customers. North-of-delta water users will receive 100 percent of contract amount, as will San Joaquin River Exchange and Settlement contractors and wildlife refuges. Contractors in the CVP Friant Division, which serves the eastern side of the San Joaquin Valley, had learned last month that they will have 30 percent of Class 1 supplies, compared to zero the previous two years.

But the 5 percent allocation for Westside farmers earned widespread criticism, given the strong runoff

**WATER** continued on **7 »**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# Agriculture

## Water Allocation Reflects Lost Opportunity

**California Farm Bureau Federation**

Continued, severe water restrictions for Central Valley farmers show the chronic inadequacy of California's water system, according to the leader of the California Farm Bureau Federation. The federal Central Valley Project announced today it would be able to supply only 5 percent of contract supplies to many of its agricultural customers.

California Farm Bureau President Paul Wenger referred to concerns expressed by many water managers during the winter about the amount of water released from reservoirs during storms.

"We'll never know how much water might have been available this summer, if we had captured more of the water that flowed to sea at the height of the El Niño storm surges," Wenger said. "That lost opportunity will haunt rural California throughout the summer."

Wenger noted that farmers continue to squeeze more crop production from every gallon of water, but that the same efficiency standards aren't required for water dedicated to fishery uses.

"In some ways, it's appropriate that this announcement of continued water shortages came on April Fools' Day," he said. "We're fooling ourselves if we think our current water system is adequate to meet all the demands on it, and we're fooling ourselves if we don't move quickly to address that inadequacy."

California needs to add flexibility to its current water system, Wenger said, while acting to expand the system through additional water storage, water recycling, desalination and continued enhancement of water efficiency.

"One thing is clear: What's happening now isn't working for fish and it isn't working for people," he said. "We haven't been able to operate our existing system to take best advantage of storms when they arrive, which leaves us even more vulnerable to the next dry year. Farm Bureau will continue to press for improved flexibility in both our water system and the regulations that govern it."

The California Farm Bureau Federation works to protect family farms and ranches on behalf of more than 53,000 members statewide and as part of a nationwide network of more than 6.2 million Farm Bureau members.

## Higher Wage Costs Bring Implications for Rural Economy

**Christine Souza, CFBF**

Confronting the reality of higher wage costs as the result of legislation signed by Gov. Brown this week, California farmers and ranchers say they expect impacts to resound throughout the rural economy.

"Employees could be laid off or see reduced work hours, and a lot of people won't be hired now," California Farm Bureau President Paul Wenger predicted. "Raising the minimum wage is going to raise all wages and will cause businesses to re-evaluate employment."

On Monday, the governor signed Senate Bill 3, a law fast-tracked through the Legislature in a week's time. The law will ultimately increase the California minimum wage to $15 an hour by 2022, after a series of incremental increases that begin in January. Starting in 2024, the minimum wage will be hiked annually for cost-of-living increases. The legislation headed off union-backed proposals that would have appeared on the November ballot.

SB 3 calls for the minimum wage to increase from the current $10 an hour, which became effective Jan. 1, to $10.50 in 2017, $11 in 2018, and additional $1 increases each year from 2019 through 2022. This timetable applies to employers with more than 25 employees, raising the minimum wage to $15 an hour by 2022. For businesses with 25 or fewer employees, implementation is delayed one year. The law gives the governor discretion to block some of the initial wage increases in the event of a recession.

CFBF Director of Employment Policy Bryan Little noted that the increase to $15 amounts to a 50 percent rise in the minimum wage during the next six years.

"This comes on top of other costs farm employers have had to absorb,

**WAGES** continued on **8 »**

## Water

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through the delta system this winter.

Fresno County Farm Bureau CEO Ryan Jacobsen said the allocation illustrated "the degree of mismanagement and inconsistency by the federal government in operating the Central Valley Project," noting if the pumps that help transfer water from the delta had been operated at higher capacity during the extreme flood flows this winter, as much as 800,000 acre-feet of water would now be in storage in the federal portion of San Luis.

"Reservoirs throughout the state have been filling," Jacobsen said. "However, the government's restrictive interpretations (of the federal Endangered Species Act and court decisions) have resulted in the permanent loss of water that should have been stored. This absurdity cannot continue."

The Westlands Water District, which serves Westside farmers, said a "big gulp, little sip" strategy is needed to make the California water supply system work, taking advantage of periods of high flow so additional water can be left in the delta during dry times.

"If the first three months of 2016 were not a time when a 'big gulp' could be taken, there will not exist such a time," the district said. "Tragically, the current federal policy, which wasted more than 250 billion gallons of water into the ocean in January, February and March, has failed to protect the species while simultaneously allowing the health of the delta to rapidly decline."

Western Growers President and CEO Tom Nassif said the federal government had "very deliberately chosen to deny available relief to thousands of Californians in the San Joaquin Valley."

CFBF President Wenger said the continued, severe water restrictions for Central Valley farmers show the chronic inadequacy of California's water system.

"We'll never know how much water might have been available this summer, if we had captured more of the water that flowed to sea at the height of the El Niño storm surges," he said. "That lost opportunity will haunt rural California throughout the summer."

Wenger also noted farmers continue to squeeze more crop production from every gallon of water, but that the same efficiency standards aren't required for water dedicated to fishery uses.

"California needs to add flexibility to its current water system," he said, "while acting to expand the system through additional water storage, water recycling, desalination and continued enhancement of water efficiency."

(Kate Campbell is an assistant editor of Ag Alert. She may be contacted at kcampbell@cfbf.com.)

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# Agriculture

## Commentary: Fumigation Rules Should Remain Flexible on Notices

**Cynthia Cory, CFBF**

Is notification needed when field fumigation occurs? That question will be discussed at two workshops to be held next week, and Farm Bureau urges you to attend.

It's important to reiterate in public the precautions farmers take before, during and after applying fumigants—and to emphasize that current regulatory oversight remains sufficient to protect farmers, farm employees and people who live and work near farm fields.

The state Department of Pesticide Regulation has scheduled next week's workshops in follow-up to one it held a year ago. DPR says it will use information gathered at the workshops to develop a new regulation.

Farm Bureau believes it is extremely important for members of the agricultural community to attend and offer comments at these two hearings, which will be held in the Salinas area and in Fresno (see the information box on this page for details).

DPR is considering whether to require that all fumigation applications follow the same residential notification requirements that now only apply to methyl bromide. Under that requirement, the owner/operator of any property that contains schools, residences, hospitals, convalescent homes or employee housing within 300 feet of the perimeter of the outer buffer zone of a methyl bromide field fumigation must be notified at least nine days prior to fumigation.

The initial notice of methyl bromide application must inform the recipient that a fumigation has been permitted and that he or she can request an additional, specific notification of the exact time the application is scheduled to commence. If requested, this second notice must be delivered in writing to the requester at least 48 hours before the start of the application. If the methyl bromide application does not take place due to labor or weather changes, re-notification is required.

The methyl bromide notification requirements were adopted before the use of total, impermeable tarps and many other improvements in application practices. With very few methyl bromide applications now occurring that actually require notification, it is an unfair comparison to extend an extremely limited-use notification to all other fumigation applications. The methyl bromide rules were put in place 14 years ago, before safety measures we have now were available.

Current law for all other fumigants allows an agricultural operator to provide notification or conduct field air monitoring for fumigation applications.

Field monitoring throughout the application is often the preferred method. It provides an effective emergency-response mechanism, because a trained employee is on hand and can stop an application, contact emergency agencies and initiate immediate remedies such as a water seal if any need arises.

Notification can work in some circumstances, but growers and applicators need the option of determining which process best fits the application site on a case-by-case basis. Consideration must be given to the cost and to the safety of farm employees who will conduct the door-to-door notification; to the farmer's personal liability if any required information is incorrect on the bilingual flyer; and the repercussions that will occur from unnecessarily alerting nearby occupants that a fumigant will be applied according to extensive rules designed to assure full protection, and explaining why they are being notified about it anyway.

Proponents of notification call it a "right to know." But where does such thinking lead us? Should you be warned when your neighbor stokes up his barbecue, or when a noisy truck picks up your garbage, or when a plane flies over your house? These are everyday occurrences that are a part of modern life.

Safe chemical applications fall into the same category. Farms use fumigants because they clean the soil and enable healthy plants to be produced using less pesticide and water. Fumigants are applied precisely and carefully, under strict regulations.

DPR is accepting comments on concepts for fumigation notification before, during and after the workshops. Any comments previously submitted in response to the April 2015 workshop in Sacramento do not need to be resubmitted.

This process about fumigation notification is separate from the DPR initiative regarding notification for pesticides applied near schools. DPR is also considering expanded pesticide application notification around schools and plans to release a proposed regulation this summer.

Please attend the fumigation-notification hearings and advise DPR about the burden providing such additional notification would place on farmers, especially smaller growers near urban areas. For example, it's important for DPR to hear details and examples of what it would mean to a farm to be required to notify all occupants 300 feet from the edge of a buffer zone of its fields.

All farmers want to apply materials safely in all circumstances, and California farmers already operate under the most stringent rules in the country. Those rules are succeeding, and DPR does not need to add another layer of unnecessary requirements.

*(Cynthia Cory is director of environmental affairs for the California Farm Bureau Federation. She may be contacted at 916-446-4647.)*

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## Commentary: Malaysian Fruit Flies in Southern California

**Marilyn Kinoshita**

As if the Los Angeles area had not been battered enough by a record number of exotic fruit fly quarantines in 2015, a new kind of quarantine has been set up in the Westchester area of Los Angeles after the detection of two Malaysian fruit flies this January.

This suburb is part of the Inglewood area, already quarantined for Oriental fruit fly.

This fly lays its eggs in peppers, tomatoes, eggplants, and cucurbits. To aid in the investigation, genetic testing is being done to determine ties to a region of the world.

All of the Hawaiian Islands are under quarantine for Malaysian fruit fly, along with the Oriental, Melon, and a close relative, the Mediterranean fruit fly. Feeding damage caused by any of these pests pose a major threat to expansion of diversified agriculture in the state.

The Agricultural Research Services (ARS) arm of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is conducting a broad fruit fly suppression study there. So far, the program has demonstrated that fruit fly populations can be substantially suppressed in an integrated pest management program involving field sanitation, chemical use, and the release of sterile fruit flies.

Unfortunately, it is a costly endeavor and all four flies would have to be eradicated to lift the quarantines in Hawaii. Full eradication would require the use of substantial quantities of other toxic substances, in combination with fruit fly attractants in a male fruit fly annihilation program.

Our office uses the male annihilation lures in our Melon and Oriental fruit fly detection traps, along with regular servicing, to detect outbreaks before they have a chance to build up. Unlike southern California, our trapping program for fruit flies extends from spring through fall.

A promising new bait which reduces both male and female fly populations is being developed, thanks to USDA ARS. This lure is made without need for solvents, and could be applied easily to wicks like those used in standard insect traps.

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## Wages

Continued from p. 7

for implementation of the (federal) Affordable Care Act, paid sick leave, new rules for compensating piece-rate workers—and now, the Legislature is considering an overtime bill to impose premium pay for farm employees after eight hours in a day rather than the current 10 hours," Little said.

Prices for farm products are set by the market, he said, meaning farmers can't pass along higher costs. California farmers must compete with farmers from other states and countries that have lower wage and benefit costs. In Arizona, for example, the minimum wage is $8.05 an hour; the federal minimum is $7.25.

The leader of the University of California Sustainable Food Systems Strategic Initiative, David Doll, noted that because farmers can't pass along the increase in wage costs to their customers, the additional pay for employees "has to come from somewhere."

"That puts the squeeze on farmers," Doll said. "The result could be putting farmers out of business, especially when commodity prices cycle downward. We need to address economics at the farm level whenever we have discussions of ag sustainability, and in this case, it hasn't been done."

The California Chamber of Commerce noted that not all areas of the state are enjoying economic recovery, with some regions continuing to face unemployment rates of 10 percent or more.

"If employers are not able to produce jobs under the current minimum wage of $10 an hour, they will not be able to afford to create jobs at a minimum wage of $15 an hour," the chamber said.

For many farm employers, wage and benefit costs represent the majority of production costs. Rich Hudgins, president and chief executive officer of the California Canning Peach Association, said labor accounts for nearly 70 percent of the direct costs for growing peaches.

"Higher labor costs will require growers to more aggressively pursue mechanization options for thinning and harvest, in order to remain viable in California's peach industry," Hudgins said.

Tulare County farmer Kerry Whitson, who grows citrus, grapes, kiwifruit and persimmons, said added costs from the increased minimum wage mean farmers will have to find additional ways to save—and employees will lose hours.

"We all have crops that have to be harvested, so we're going to have to find other ways to cut back and save to be able to do that and leave a profit on the other side," Whitson said. "Now, looking at overtime (legislation) and a much higher wage, you are not going to offer the bonus, you are not going to voluntarily pay over what you are supposed to pay; it is going to suck everybody down into that minimum-wage bracket and you are going to cut hours so you can stay away from any overtime."

The pending overtime legislation, Assembly Bill 2757 by Assembly Member Lorena Gonzalez, D-San Diego, is similar to other bills that have been introduced in the Legislature two previous times. Farmers say the overtime bill, should it become law, would likely reduce the number of hours agricultural employees work, thereby reducing their take-home pay.

Whitson noted that retailers and other businesses that do have the opportunity to pass along their added wage costs will do so, which will affect farm employees "every bit as much" as farmers.

"When they go to the mini-mart to get gasoline or to the grocery store, nothing is going to cost less. Everybody is going to try and pass on those costs," he said.

Wenger said the minimum wage was never established to be a living wage, and said the scheduled wage increases come as farmers and ranchers try to recover from several years of drought.

"There are so many challenges in agriculture today and now, with the minimum wage increases and with the pending overtime legislation, it's just going to make it very difficult to farm profitably in California," he said.

"California claims to have a love affair with locally grown food and the farm-to-fork phenomenon, but folks in Sacramento continue to stick the fork in the farmer," Wenger said. "The bottom line is that the people intended to be helped by minimum-wage increases are actually going to be hurt, because of reduced employment opportunities."

(Christine Souza is an assistant editor of Ag Alert. She may be contacted at csouza@cfbf.com.)

*This article reprinted with the permission of the California Farm Bureau Federation.*

The car crushed and obscured by a large tree in Sacramento. Courtesy/Andy Vidak

# Senator Vidak Saves Motorist from Falling Tree in Sacramento

**Nancy Vigran**

Senator Andy Vidak (R-Hanford) was all the talk around the State Capital last week - not because of a bill in the legislature, but rather because of his act as a Good Samaritan.

Vidak was taking a walk on J Street in Sacramento, following a senate session on Monday, March 28, when he heard a "crack" come from a tree. He looked to find a large tree limb cracking away from the tree.

He saw a woman sitting in a parked car under the tree and advised her to move, said Jann Taber, Vidak's communication director. He steered another car away from parking there and tried to slow passing traffic down, while calling 911.

His call automatically went to the California Highway Patrol, which redirected it to the Sacramento Police Department. He was told that public works, or the department of parks and rec, would be notified of the problem, but at that point no first-responders were called.

"I think, because he is a cherry farmer, he knew the branch was going to fall," Taber said. "He had no doubt that it was coming down."

As Vidak was slowing down another driver – the branch fell, onto her car. The bulk of the branch landed on the hood, less than two feet from the windshield, Taber said.

Then, the first responders came. No one was seriously injured, and the tree was removed from the street, which was reopened later that day.

Vidak never told the 911 operators that he was a senator, nor did he tell the woman who was driving the damaged car, who had asked for his number in case her insurance company needed a witness.

But a news photographer who covers the Capitol told her and others, and word got out, Taber said.

It was amazing how fast the press arrived, Taber said.

"I walked that direction for a reason I guess. God put me on that path and put me in that direction and I heard it," Vidak said, according to KCRA News in Sacramento.

"It was a matter of right place, right time," Taber said.

Had he not been there, someone could have been seriously injured, or worse.

"He never wanted the press coverage out of it," Taber said. "He was just being a Good Samaritan – that's how Andy is."

# Polling Place Changes for Some Voters

Tulare County Registrar of Voters, Rita A. Woodard, announces that although every effort has been made to keep your Polling Sites the same, as a result of district boundary line changes in a number of Tulare County areas and a number of unavailable poll sites for the June 7, 2016 Presidential Primary Election, the following polling place changes have been made:

- A total of 2 polling places were eliminated.
- Approximately 4,500 voters were relocated to new polling place locations.
- Approximately 5,750 voters are now in mail-ballot precincts.

Voters that have been affected by these changes have been notified my mail. If your Polling Location has changed, please check the back of your Sample Ballot or you may also use the available tools on our website to look up your Polling Location and Sample Ballot. If your Polling Site has been eliminated, you will receive your ballot with instructions in the mail.

The Tulare County Elections Office serves as an early Vote Center. Any voter who wishes to cast their ballot in person may do so beginning 29 days prior to Election, May 9, 2016 - June 7, 2016.

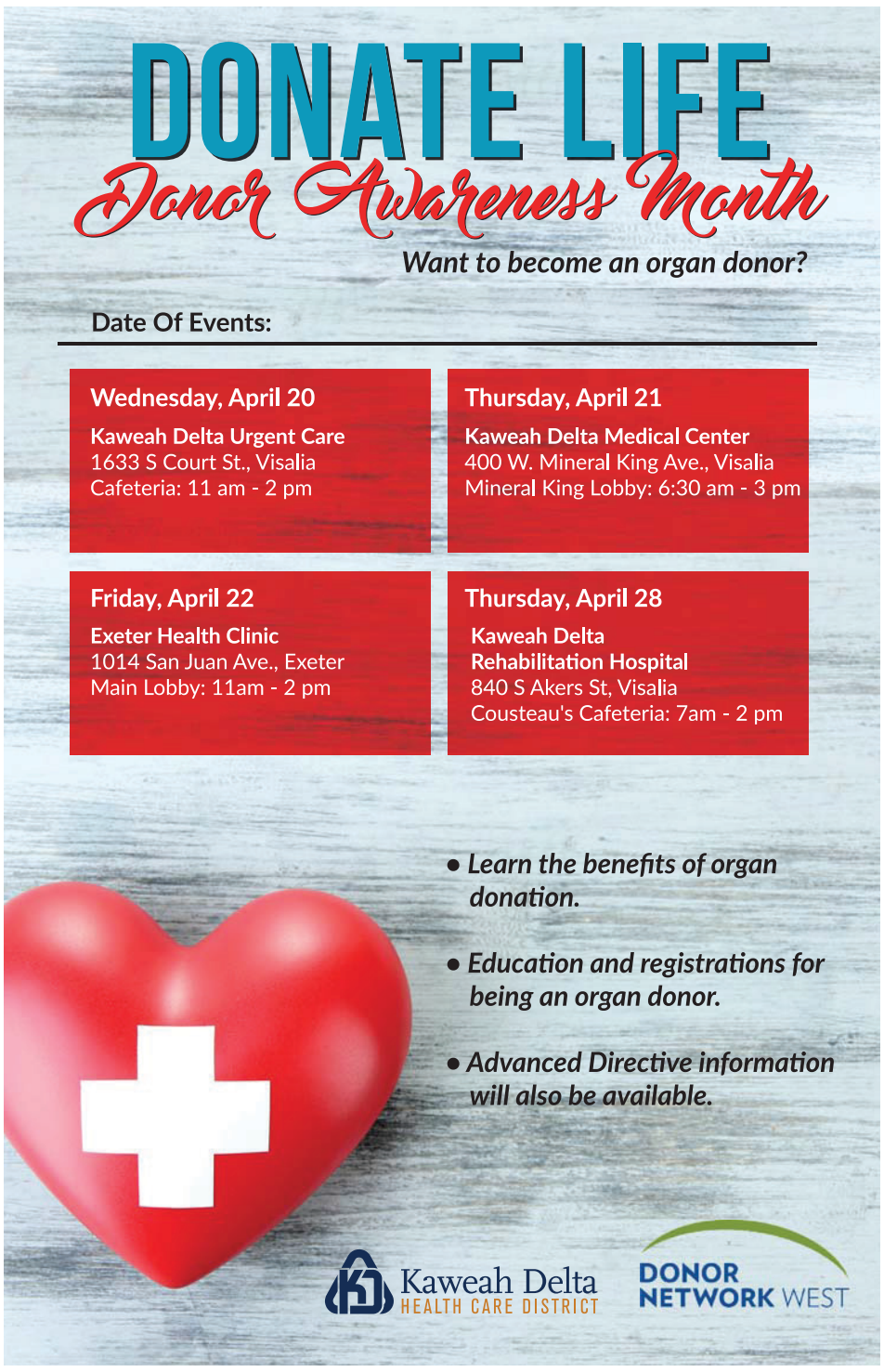
If you have questions or concerns regarding these changes, please feel free to contact the Elections Office at (559) 624-7300.

# Self-Help Enterprises to Host Water Boards Leadership Institute

Self-Help Enterprises and the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) will be hosting a Water Boards Leadership Institute, which strengthens community leadership by teaching skills and tools to be more intentional, effective and energized leaders. Participants must be current or aspiring members of water or sewer district boards of directors from disadvantaged communities in the San Joaquin Valley.

The Water Boards Leadership Institute development course begins in June. There is no cost for the course. The course lasts six months, and meets one weekend per month at Self-Help Enterprises (8445 W. Elowin Ct, Visalia). The schedule below will give participants the opportunity to implement skills acquired in each phase of the course and then reconvene to process, and learn more. By the end of the course, participants will be equipped to take up challenging problems in their community and lay out sensible, achievable approaches to solving those problems.

Those interested in joining can email their name and contact information to nancyg@selfhelpenterprises.org or call us at (559) 802-1627. More information is also available at http://bit.ly/2016LeadershipInstitute.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# Ruiz 4 Kids 2017 'Mini-Grants for Teachers' Application Now Available

Ruiz 4 Kids has opened the application process for the Mini-Grants for Teacher for the 2017 school year. The deadline to submit an application online is June 15.

The grant is open to teachers in grades K-12 serving public schools in Parlier, Orange Cove, Dinuba, Orosi, Reedley, Traver and Tulare. Grant awards range from $300 - $1,000. To align with the objectives of the Ruiz 4 Kids organization, teachers interested in submitting a grant are reminded to ensure their intended projects are creative and will enhance their students learning experience. Grant recipients are also expected to report on the expenditure of grant funds and results of the supported project at the end of the funded school year.

For additional information on grant criteria which includes Funding Priorities and how to apply visit, http://www.ruiz4kids.org/programs-mini-grants.aspx and click on the Teacher Grant link.

# Vincent Salinas Earns Endorsement from Jim Qualls

The Committee to Elect Vincent B. Salinas for Tulare County Board of Supervisor District 1 announces that: Jim Qualls, who had originally filed to run for Tulare County Board of Supervisor in District 1, has endorsed Vincent Salinas for that position.

Vincent Salinas has received endorsements from some of the mayors and councilmen in the cities of Lindsay, Exeter, Farmersville and Visalia; Mayor Ramona Padilla and Councilman Danny Salinas of Lindsay; Exeter Councilman Gordon Gerdes; Mayor Greg Gomez, Mayor Pro-Tem Paul Boyer, Councilman Matt Sisk and Councilman Lionel Benavides of Farmersville; Vice-Mayor Warren Gubler and Mayor Steve Nelson of Visalia. These elected officials support Salinas' commitment to improving the overall quality of life in Tulare County.

He says he will work to develop better working relationships between city and county governments through joint projects, and to reduce the unemployment and poverty rates by promoting the creation of business and job opportunities within the county.

"I would like to thank them for their endorsement of support and their confidence in my ability to represent all of District 1 on the Tulare County Board of Supervisors," Salinas said.

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# Macareno Picks Up Secretary of State Endorsement

Ruben Macareno, a State Assembly candidate, continues to pick up endorsements. This week Tulare City Councilwoman Maritza Castellanoz joined California Secretary of State Alex Padilla in endorsing Macareno for the 26th Assembly seat. The Padilla endorsement is the second statewide elected officer to endorse Macareno, California Insurance Commissioner Dave Jones was the first to do so.

"There will be more to come. What these endorsements demonstrate is that I am in step with California and its leaders," said Macareno. "We need to bring Tulare County and the rest of the district out of the dark. I offer what my opponents can not; the ability to get things done, to network effectively and bring needed resources and representation to the area."

Macareno points out that a leader stands up when issues or concerns come to the forefront. With regard to Donald Trump it's important that something is said on the local level. "Trumpmania" is creating a tense and dangerous environment. Macareno recently denounced Donald Trump, his campaign and his movement.

"This is not a partisan position but one out of concern for our country," said Macareno. Trump's efforts to become president of the United States has soiled the fabric of what makes the country great and that his continued efforts will continue to set the nation back domestically and internationally said Macareno.

His vision for America is dangerous.

"When a national party makes every effort to stop its own front-runner there is certainly something very wrong with their candidate," said Macareno. "It's not only obvious to the Republican core and leadership but also to the majority of the American people that Trump is dividing the country in ways no one has ever done. He has insulted almost every group, fellow Republican opponents and others who oppose him. He has also consistently promoted aggressive actions to be taken up by his supporters at his rallies."

Macareno states that instead of building up or bringing together the country he is tearing it down. "Under Trump we would go back at least 60 years," says Macareno.

He challenges his assembly opponents to state their positions regarding Donald Trump.

The 26th State Assembly includes most of Tulare County, the north tip of Kern County and all of Inyo County.

# Playground

Continued from p. 1

reconsider and resurface the playground with rubber material as it was originally.

The petition said, in part:

"In 2007, the Endless Dreams Playground at Freedom Park became a reality for ALL citizens, able and disabled. The fully accessible park was built entirely on private donations. It was meant to serve children with disabilities and their families.

Two years ago, the city of Hanford initiated a capital park improvement plan for all city parks which included a project to remove the aging rubber surface of the Endless Dreams Playground and replace it with wood chips. It was a 'cost saving measure.'"

Prior to the April 5 meeting, the petition had 1,031 signatures.

"I am very overwhelmed by the response," said Soares, who works at a local school.

"I had a parent tell me, today," she said, "that they travel to the park because of the beauty of it and accessibility of it."

"We raised over $100,000 and built that structure with a 'freedom' of boundaries and 'freedom' [received] from the military forces, which we have so many of here."

At the April 5 meeting, many residents again spoke in favor of the rubber matting.

On the agenda, staff reported on recent meetings and review of the matter and asked council to choose either the wood fiber chipping at the cost of $35,000 or rubber matting at approximately $80,000 more. Staff recommended that if the rubber was chosen, that it be laid in one color only as many of the deterioration problems seemed to have resulted from the seaming of more than one color.

Department of Parks & Recreation Director Craig Miller emphasized that it was never the intent of the staff to snub those who had donated to the park in the past, or to demean the park of the residents in any way. It was simply the intent to save funds.

Staff advised that council realize that rubber surfacing still comes with a five-year warranty, as it did originally. Council should also realize that every 7-10 years the rubber will need an approximate $110,000 to grind it down an inch.

John Doyle, deputy public works director, suggested council develop a Department of Parks and Recreation Equipment Replacement Fund, so the budget would be prepared for the expense in advance. The original motion was amended before the 5-0 vote.

Workers will return to the park to renovate the new rubber surfacing soon.

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# Shame

Continued from p. 1

insurance industry looking at hospital construction documents," Hobbs said. "That was invaluable. He spent hours and hours pouring over those documents to come up with those recommendations. No one can fault us for not looking into this carefully and thoroughly."

## DISCLOSURE WITHOUT DELAY

Concluding the Grand Jury's report are three "recommendations" that must be addressed in the Board's response. The Grand Jury recommends members of the Board undergo training in governmental transparency and the disclosure requirements related to spending public funds; full release "without delay" to the public of how the $85 million in bond funding was spent during the period from September of 2007 to December 2015; and disbanding and replacing the Bond Oversight Committee, giving it all the necessary tools to conduct true oversight.

"What the Grand Jury would like to see, and what I think would be the only appropriate response, is how they spent the $85 million in bond money," said Hobbs. "It's been 10 years and they have not provided a full disclosure. It's been a full decade."

## $50 MILLION MISSING

While the Grand Jury does not disclose specific details of its work, its findings closely mirror those of Alberto Aguilar. The retired postal worker, Tulare resident and former Tulare County grand juror became frustrated while trying to do his job as a member of the Bond Oversight Committee and began digging for details.

"What I'm looking for basically is transparency and accountability," Aguilar said. "I've been told by the attorney for the hospital that information will not be provided to me as a member of the Bond Committee. I want to know where the money went."

Aguilar started with the limited audits that were available, comparing the District's fiscal year reports with the reports it issued on the bond funds. He says he found huge discrepancies.

"There's approximately $50 million that's not accounted for," he said.

## PROJECTS OUT OF SCOPE

When he started to review the flood of contracts, invoices and reports on the expansion project he received in response to his demands for data, Aguilar said he also found bond funds were spent inappropriately.

"They thought they were going to inundate me," he said. "Some of the information was so small I had to use a magnifying glass."

Aguilar says documents the District supplied him show $39,000 in bond money was spent to move a modular building from Tulare to Woodville, where the District operated a clinic. A construction trailer was renovated at a cost of $100,000 in bond funds. Another $100,000 from the bond issue was spent on the construction of a new marquee. All these projects, Aguilar said, fall outside the scope of the Phase 1 Tower Project.

All of Aguilar's findings are carefully documented, and he had help compiling them from former TRMC CEO Bob Montion.

"I asked the former CEO Bob Montion, who has since passed away, to help us," Aguilar said. "He compiled a report. I told him he needed exhibits so people won't think you're making this up."

## WHY $55 MILLION?

Aguilar also wants to know why the District is preparing to ask voters for another bond issue, one much larger than the amount needed to finish the tower.

"They are going to be putting another bond before us," he said. "Last March, there was a motion to put a $55 million parcel tax. It was supported by our city mayor."

That $55 million request raised a red flag for Aguilar, who wants to know why the amount far exceeds the estimate the District has given for completing Phase 1.

"Their own auditor estimates only $20 million is needed to complete all construction," he said.

## NOTHING BUT FRUSTRATION

As Aguilar searched for answers, he found nothing but frustration.

"When I started seeing how money was being mismanaged and misused, I went to the people who spent it, especially the CEO (Benzeevi)," he said. "When he wouldn't address my concerns, I took it to the Committee and the Board."

Then in February, Aguilar received a shocking message from his radio. The Bond Oversight Committee, he was told while listening to TLHCD Chair Bell being interviewed, had been dissolved. He decided to confront her in person at a Board meeting.

"At Wednesday's meeting, there was a lot of commotion going on. I asked Sherrie Bell if I could speak to her. I wanted to get information from the horse's mouth," he said, recalling the questions he asked her. "'You indicated on KTIP radio the Bond Committee had been dissolved. Why wasn't I informed? Why haven't we been allowed to take a look at the financial data?'"

Aguilar said Bell told him the BOC hadn't been dissolved, but that it was no longer meeting. The Board, Aguilar said, is responsible for arranging BOC meetings and providing the data they are to review; it simply stopped scheduling meetings, he said.

## FINAL FRUSTRATION

In his efforts to find a way to access real numbers on the Tower Project, Aguilar wrote a long letter to State Assemblyman Devon Mathis (R-26), asking him to initiate an audit through the state's Joint Legislative Audit Committee. To his shock, Mathis refused. The shock became anger when he leaned why.

"He (Mathis) said he won't do it because he owes Dr. Benzeevi a favor," Aguilar said. "Apparently, he's (Benzeevi) helping him (Mathis) with a hospital in the Sierra."

According to Mathis' Form 460, HCCA donated $3,500 to "Mathis for Assembly, 2016" on 31 December, 2015.

Benzeevi and HCCA recently signed an agreement with the Southern Inyo Hospital District to take over management of that district's only hospital, a small facility that had recently closed. There, a newly-elected board in office for just four days agreed to a 5-year contract with HCCA. HCCA will apparently provide $2.5 to $3.5 million in loans to SIHD, as well as paying for the struggling district's Chapter 9 bankruptcy, according to press reports.

Both sides in that agreement had 30 days to back out; however, that period elapsed before the release of the Grand Jury's report. Dick Fedchenko, chair of the SIHD board, said he was not aware of the report.

"At this point there's nothing I can say about that as I haven't read the report," he said. He was, however, briefed on the replacement of TRMC's medical staff and had questions for Benzeevi.

"I've been made aware of the situation with the medical staff, but not in any great detail," Fedchenko said. "I've asked Dr. Benzeevi for some time on his next trip so we can sit down and discuss it so I can see his point of view."

Assemblyman Mathis has not responded to repeated requests for an interview.

## "WHAT WENT ON IN '07?"

Former TLHCD board member Deanne Martin-Soares served on the Board when the bond was passed by voters.

"I was there in the planning phase in '05," she said. "Then it got all screwy."

The first of the bond money was spent in 2007, and by the time Martin-Soares left the Board she hadn't seen a single accounting of the project.

"For a year and half, I never saw any financials," she said. "My big question is what went on in '07? The revenue bonds were resold, and there could have been more revenue. That's why I think this bond is for $55 million."

District reports, Martin-Soares said, show the District has spent a lot more money than it raised.

"If you look at the audited financials of 2015, they are showing $130 million put toward the tower," she said. "More than $85 million was spent."

Since the District will not release any data, no one knows for sure what was spent and where it came from. The reason the District and HCCA won't talk remains a mystery.

## CITIZENS GET PRIORITY

It could have remained a mystery much longer, perhaps forever, if it weren't for citizen complaints to the Grand Jury, said Foreman White. Grand juries in California are required by law to act swiftly when they receive a credible complaint from a citizen.

"We look into it, and we look into it right away," White said. "That should be distinctly different in your mind's eye. The Grand Jury can initiate an investigation, but it doesn't carry the same weight."

There was also some personal satisfaction in this case, White and Juror Hobbs agreed.

"We're all excited we were able to accomplish our mission," White said.

"That's in no small part due to the print media," Hobbs said. "You could have ignored it (the Grand Jury report), but you didn't. I held my breath."

While the Grand Jury's term is limited, citizens and media have a responsibility that doesn't end, White said.

"Grand juries come and grand juries go. Our term of office will expire on June 30th. We will have no power," he said. "You guys will continue. I hope you guys stay on it and keep asking the question, "'Why not?'"

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# Voices of the Valley

## Scot Hillman

**Nancy Vigran**

For those who live in Tulare, the names Heiskell and Hillman are fairly commonplace.

Scot Hillman, a son of Dale Hillman and Pat (Heiskell) Hillman, is chairman of the board at J.D. Heiskell & Co. He admits that he has a lot of his mother's traits and some from his father as well, but he has created his own path in the company and the community.

Founded in 1886, J.D. Heiskell & Co. was located on the west side of the tracks in Tulare – the tracks were the reason there was a Tulare, it was a railroad town, Hillman said.

The family became grain merchants and operated a storage house for wheat before it was hauled up to the north end of the Valley by the new railroad to the flour mills. But, it developed into much more.

"My grandfather took over from my great grandfather, the founder. He was the only son, and then my grandfather had two daughters and only my mom married. My dad came into the business in 1953 and they had four kids," Hillman said.

"I was the one who took the business on," he added, "I have a brother, Brett, who is a [Tulare County] superior court judge, and I have a sister up in Seattle and another brother who lives in Texas."

Hillman usually has coffee with his mom in the morning, he said.

"We catch up often – she is a big part of the heart of this business," he said. "She loves our employees and she's on our board. She wants to come to every employee event and she is a wonderful ambassador for this business."

The new J.D. Heiskell offices were recently, and rather appropriately, built on Hillman Avenue. Tulare is the traditional headquarters of the business.

But the biggest part of the business is Midwest-based, Hillman said. There are offices located in Elkhorn Nebraska, just outside of Omaha. Most of the grain originates in the Midwest and is manufactured for dairies in California.

"We are a Midwest business, founded in Tulare," he said. "We still call it our headquarters."

"We have a fifth generation in the business – my son is on track to be the CFO in two years," when the current CFO retires, he said.

Hillman's brother has a daughter, who graduated from Cornell last year, and she is planning on also joining the business, once she finishes up some other work. The company has a rule that family members have to work five years outside of the family business before they can begin to work in the company. She is currently completing her outside work.

"We didn't have that when I joined," Hillman said. "I rode with truck drivers and I worked in the mill. I was a buyer, so I understand the market. It was really good. I spent some time with the dairyman and so I understand how they work.

"That was my dad [the influence] - I am very grateful to him for having me learn from the people who were actually out there conducting the business.

"I always liked it – I always liked, when we were little, my dad would take us down to the office and we'd run around and play in the grain – it always seemed like a family business. Everybody knew our family," he said. "I just always liked the earthiness of it - it's a green-type business, where we deal with other types of family businesses – our customers are other types of family businesses. We have, necessarily, become more professional as we have become larger. We have to have more infrastructure and more resources and more IT people, but at the heart we are still a family business.

"That's my biggest role is to make sure that it feels like that to people."

Hillman studied at Stanford University as history major and communications major. Then he learned the family business from being in the business, and now he has been in it for more than 40 years.

"My dad brought in some consultants who helped me learn more about what being a leader was about – 'OK, you've got to quit wearing the jeans and the polo shirts and the tennis shoes,'" he said. "'Look at your dad – when he walks around here, he makes the earth shake, and you've got to make the earth shake," [he was told].

"My dad officially retired in 1991, although he came in every day until he passed away – he opened the mail. And in 2000, we purchased a competitor here in the Valley and the competitor was three times larger than we were, and things got really crazy. I was unable to manage a business that went from 140 employees to 300-and-something employees. And so we hired, for the first time, outside professional management for our business. Butch Fisher was the guy we hired and he was the guy who really helped me grow up as a business person and as a business leader. He had worked 29 years of a CEO of a very successful Midwest grain company, Scoular.

"Going to 'school' with Butch every day and watching how he did things, how he lead – he hired a CFO who had worked with him at Scoular, he is still our CFO, Tim Regan, and between Butch and Tim, they really professionalized our business – while allowing, in a lot of ways through me, allowing the family side of the business to still be the biggest informer of our culture.

"That was such a great lesson for me to be able to observe and we have just come a really long way since we made the decision to hire people in to lead our business who weren't family," he said. "Up to that point it was my great grandfather, my grandfather, my father and me, and now we had these guys and the three of us became the managers of the company."

Hillman's son, Jefferson Davis Hillman, like his father graduated from Stanford. He was named after his great, great grandfather, as he was born on the actual day of the 100th anniversary of the company. He is the only family member who has actually worked on a dairy, having spent a nine-month stint working at a local dairy after college, before finding a position in the banking industry.

Hillman's daughter, Mallory, is married and lives in Kentucky with her husband and Hillman's first grandchild, who was born last September.

Hillman was divorced in 2012, and

remarried in 2014. His wife, Adrianne has three sons, ages 6, 9 and 12.

"So I now have three more sons in my life. They are a lot of fun, I just took one to school in Visalia this morning – we tag team them." Hillman said.

"We are building a house here in town that I am very excited about – actually renovating an older home on an acre in town, which is kind of rare in Tulare," he said.

"My wife is a singer, she and I play in the band in our church," he said, "that is something we enjoy doing together. We love playing music together."

"It is really important to me, as it is to my mom and was to my grandfather, to be involved in the community and so we do a lot of things," Hillman said.

Hillman has been the Spelling Master at the Tulare County Department of Education spelling bee since it started 17 years ago. The fourth- through eighth-grader event has about 240 children entered per year.

"This year I read almost 550 words over six hours," he said. "It's a long deal. I dressed up as a referee this year, because it was a sport's theme."

He MCs a lot of events in Tulare, including Comix 4 Kidz – a fundraiser for the Boys and Girls Club, and the local Rotary Club's annual auction.

Hillman also served on the Tulare Chamber of Commerce board for a long time including serving as past president; has been a member of the local Rotary Club since 1989 and served as president of that, and belongs to multiple national and state feed associations having served as president of the California Grain and Feed Association.

And while Hillman himself was never involved in Future Farmers of America during high school, both of his children were and he continues to judge FFA competitions. The company also provides a FFA scholarship each year.

"One of the things that J.D. Heiskell has going, is that we are involved," he said.

"We try to support as many local things as we can. In every location, where we have a regional office –here in California, in Nebraska, down in Amarillo, Texas and up in Idaho – we have a charitable committee at each location.

"It does give people a front row seat to our philanthropy. I am just an observer, if they say 'no, I don't want to support this,' they get to make the decision. That is another way to get people involved," he said.

"My mom is a founding member of the Tulare County Symphony, so we are symphony supporters, the museum we support, and my mom is still on the county school board at 88 years old, and she was almost 30 years on the Tulare City school board and so a lot of educational initiatives get a lot of special attention from us too."

Hillman considers himself an outdoor person.

"I am a life-long runner and enjoy mountain climbing," he said. "I like to get people outside and active.

"I'm still runnin', my knees are getting a little creeky, but I still get out there because I want to stay in shape to climb mountains and go backpacking, and go skiing and golfing, and things that I like to do," he said. "That's when you restore a little of your humanity, when you get to get out and do the things that really don't require a lot of thought and emotion.

"I started running when I came back from college to get in shape, and the next thing you know you kind of need a goal, so you are running a six-mile race, and so I trained for that – then the guys are talking about a marathon, and so I trained for a marathon and the next thing you know, I have run 14 marathons and so the next thing you know, it ended up being a way of life.

"At this point, I just take my dog out for four miles on the ditch bank and call it good. It's not like the old days when I trained, but I feel like my body won't hold up to that kind of training anymore. I try to do some type of exercise every day.

"I have a group that I climb with every summer – it's my week with guys – Neanderthal hygiene and what we call rotisserie sleep, where you sleep on the ground and you sleep on your back, and you are uncomfortable, so you sleep on your side, and then you roll over and sleep on your stomach and then you roll over and on the other side, because the ground is so hard, by the morning you have rolled over about four times, completely."

His mom, Pat Hillman, instilled music into all of her children at a young age.

"My mom started me on cello in the fourth grade and so I played in the [Tulare County] Symphony a little bit in high school and college," he said. "When I went to college I picked up the guitar, so I taught myself to play guitar."

Hillman travels "A LOT" –

**HILLMAN** continued on **13 »**

# Viewpoint

## Bernie Sanders and America's Ambivalent Socialist Legacy

**Newell G. Bringhurst**

Bernie Sanders' string of primary victories over Hillary Clinton, commencing with New Hampshire and most recently in Washington, Hawaii, and Alaska continues to confound political pundits. The obvious question is: why Sanders, not even Democratic Party member emerged as a formidable opponent to the former Secretary of State, U.S. Senator, and one-time First Lady—the clear Democratic Party establishment favorite? Such a question is particularly perplexing given that Sanders presents himself as a democratic Socialist.

To answer this question, it is necessary to examine America's ambivalent Socialist legacy. Older Americans, including myself, who came of age during the mid-Twentieth Century viewed Socialism as akin to totalitarian Communism. America's Cold War confrontation with the Soviet Union enhanced this image. Such perceptions continued throughout the late Twentieth Century, ending only with collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Socialism, in fact, has played an integral role throughout American history, with roots reaching back into the late Eighteenth Century. Simply defined, Socialism calls for the common holding of property and the means of production by all members of the community. Early examples of American Socialism include Utopian communities, the most noteworthy being Anne Lee's Shaker community. During the Nineteenth Century, the Mormon Church practiced communitarian Socialism, initially under the leadership of founding prophet, Joseph Smith and later under Brigham Young.

By the late Nineteenth Century, American Socialists entered the political arena prompted by the growing inequality of wealth resulting from America's Industrial Revolution. A series of fledgling Socialist third parties emerged. The largest and most prominent, the American Socialist Party fielded candidates for local, state, and national office. At its peak in 1912, Socialists held public office in 340 cities, including that of mayor in Milwaukee, Buffalo, and Minneapolis. Socialists elected to the U.S. House of Representatives included Victor Berger of Wisconsin and Meyer London of New York. Eugene Victor Debs, ran for President five times on the Socialist Party ticket receiving six percent of the vote in 1912. Socialists expanded their agenda to include an array of economic and political reforms, many enacted into law through the efforts of Progressive politicians who dominated both the Democratic and Republican parties during the first two decades of the Twentieth Century.

By the 1920s, however, American Socialism fell on hard times following American entry into World War I. The vast majority of Socialists strongly opposed American involvement in this conflict, the most prominent perennial Presidential contender, Eugene Debs. Socialists were thus dubbed, unpatriotic. American Socialism suffered a second major setback resulting from the 1917 Russian Revolution and establishment of a totalitarian Communist regime. This in turn, inspired a cadre of self-proclaimed American radicals to acts of violence, setting off the "Red Scare of 1919." In response, U.S. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer ordered the arrest and imprisonment of hundreds of suspected radicals. Among those detained was Eugene Debs, then in the midst of yet another Presidential campaign. A majority of Americans came to view Socialism as synonymous with totalitarian Communism this misperception persisting over the following two decades.

Such guilt by association continued and in fact intensified with the onset of America's Cold War with the Soviet Union following World War II. This set off the "Second Red Scare" of the 1950s. Leading this new wave of hysteria was Wisconsin's United States Senator, Joseph R. McCarthy. Universities, labor unions, public schools, and movie studios purged themselves of all suspected left-wingers, be they Socialist or otherwise.

American Socialism refused to die. Avowed Socialists continued active in the political arena. Milwaukee, a major center of American Socialism since the early 1900s continued to elect a series of Socialist mayors well into mid-Twentieth Century. In California Socialist author-activist Upton Sinclair ran for California governor on three different occasions from the mid-1920s through the 1930s, actually securing the Democratic nomination in 1934, but falling short winning.

By the 1960s a new generation of Socialists came of age. These included Tom Hayden, leader of the burgeoning student New Left, radical author C. Wright Mills, whose ***The Power Elite*** exposed America's concentration of wealth and condemned the Cold War arms race. A second Socialist author, Michael Harrington penned ***The Other America*** which inspired President Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty." Also parading his Socialist credentials was preeminent Civil Rights leader, Martin Luther King, Jr.

Although Bernie Sanders calls himself a democratic Socialist, he does not advocate government ownership of banks and/or the means of production/manufacturing. Rather his views fall squarely within the progressive wing of the Democratic Party. Granted, Sanders' emergence comes at a time when just 31% of Americans have a positive view of Socialism, according to a recent Pew Research Center survey. However, barely 50% of Americans have a positive view of capitalism. Socialism fares considerably better among younger Americans—those 18 to 29 year olds, with 49% viewing it in positive terms. A mere 47% of this same age group harbors a positive view of capitalism. This Millennial generation that came of age after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe does not harbor the same negative view of Socialism held by their elders. Thus, not surprisingly younger voters are among Sanders core supporters, attracted by his call for tuition-free college education, campaign finance reform, and break-up of large Wall Street financial institutions.

Granted, Sanders' chances of securing the Democratic presidential nomination appear remote, given Hillary Clinton's huge lead among committed delegates chosen thus far. But the Vermont Socialist has pushed his Democratic rival further to the left. Most important Sanders' campaign has forced debate on a number of, heretofore ignored issues—the undue influence of wealth on the political process, the need for campaign finance reform, and growing income inequality. In fact, Sanders, with no little irony, appeals to many of the same angry, dissatisfied voters, drawn to Donald Trump's authoritarian populism.

## Leadership, Ethics, and Practice: Leading Change by Example

**Angel Galvez**

Serving the severe and persistent mentally ill is an experience I have the pleasure of working in. As a family member of a mother whom is diagnosed with Bipolar disorder, I understand the impact stigma on people with mental illness. As a result of both, people like my mother with mental illness are robbed of the opportunities that define a quality life: good jobs, safe housing, satisfactory health care, and much more. I stand for a strong support in the Health and Safety of our communities, Water Infrastructure, and Fiscal Responsiveness.

In recent ride-along with the local police departments that cover the area of district one I discovered that many of the issues faced in the community were related to gang violence, robbery/theft, child and elder abuse, drug and alcohol substance abuse and suicide. While acknowledging the public authorities' role in promoting the health, safety and security of the public, it is also the client's/investee's responsibility to avoid or minimize these risks and impacts that may arise from operations. In my observations this includes implementing the following actions:

- Infrastructure and equipment safety. Ensure needs to prevent or minimize the potential injury to the surrounding community, especially if aspects of the operations are to involve operation of moving equipment that is deemed old and unsafe.

Using evidence-based practices and my experience in community planning, policy and procedure development lends to a skill set and knowledge required to work effectively and efficiently as a County Board of Supervisor. While I've listened and participated on the Board of Supervisors weekly board meetings, water infrastructure and sustainability is major issue in our county. At 4800 plus square miles of land and water area at a mere .03%, water has become a huge concern for the future of the Ag industry. Innovative thinking like the Tulare County Beaver Reservoir Project (featured in the February issue of the Valley Voice), a water storage project I proposed will lead us in the right direction. These projects like many of the projects I oversee at the county level are done fiscally sound.

My extensive knowledge of managing contracts, overseeing budgets and expenditures, community planning and assisting in redesign and realignment projects aligns well with matters handled at the Board of Supervisor level. I am accountable for the work implemented and I intend to use a similar work ethic that I am already doing; I am doing it because I care about the people that live, work, and visit this county. After obtaining an advanced education outside this county, I came home to give back to those that gave to me. More importantly, I came back to see change, quality of life reestablished, water infrastructure and sustainability measures flourish, and fiscal accountability and ethics exhorted. For more information on Angel Galvez you can follow him on Facebook: Leading Change with Angel Galvez.

## Hillman

Continued from p. 12

probably two weeks a month, but not the full two weeks, he said.

"This is the first full week I have spent in the office all year," he said during the last week in March.

"It is so important to do as much family time as you can," he said. "So, I do – that's what I do when I'm home – go to their events, go to their assemblies, go to their soccer games – I've done it once and I really enjoyed it. I love raising our kids and being involved with our kids, so I'm just getting to do it again."

Hillman said he sleeps well and sleeps hard.

"I'm really type B – I don't stress a lot," he said. "I think my mom has that same battery – she's active, she's social, she's been a real inspiration to me in terms of staying out there, staying busy, staying involved, staying in touch with everybody.

"The bars been set – you can do it, if you want," he said of following in her footsteps. "She's extremely vital at 88 years old and I would love to be that way."

If he weren't in the family business, he sees himself doing relatively the same type of work, or working in music.

"I'd be like a creative person, in a business person's role," he said.

"The company is very important to me and making sure it succeeds into another generation is why I'm here – that is 'Job 1' for me – I am not going to let my hobbies get in the way," he said. "But someday . . . there are very capable hands waiting to accept the baton at some point. I love to travel and I hope that someday Adrianne and I can do a lot of traveling, and we can do our music thing together.

"Like my dad, I always want to be involved in the business – I always want to be an ambassador for it and I always want to kind of have my finger on the pulse, a little bit. It is one of those businesses you never really retire from, because it's your family. I get along well with my brothers and sister – it's my role to keep them feeling like this is their business too. So there is a whole bunch of reasons why I could never really walk away and say 'here's the keys.'

"My dad didn't – it was fun for me to make sure that he had a role in the business as long as he wanted to have one and I am hoping that is something that works for me with my successors."

In closing Hillman said, "The word "bored" bothers me. When people say they are bored, I cannot understand that. I mean if they locked you in a cell – then you'd be bored."

**On this special Viewpoint page: TRMC has come under increasing scrutiny as of late, in these pages and by the Tulare County Grand Jury. The Valley Voice took this opportunity to allow TRMC to rebut this at length. —ed**

# Tulare Regional Medical Center: The Story of a Hospital's Turnaround

**Kathleen Johnson**

## History

With the passage of two bonds and help from the federal government, the Tulare Local Health Care District was formed in 1946. Three years later, construction began on the 86-bed hospital. In 1951, the $1.1 million hospital was dedicated and opened to the public.

In 1993, as the city of Tulare grew, a major renovation and expansion project added a new pediatric unit to the hospital. Over the next 20 years, the District continued to add needed services including medical imaging, rehabilitation, home care and the state-of-the-art Evolutions Fitness & Wellness Center.

Many groups ensured the continuing success of the hospital, including the Tulare District Hospital Auxiliary which contributes tens of thousands of dollars toward the purchase of life-saving equipment every year. In 1987, the Tulare Hospital Foundation was established to raise much-needed funds for hospital services and expansion projects as well as educate the public about the many excellent hospital programs.

In 2014, the TRMC board agreed to affiliate with HealthCare Conglomerate Associates to manage the hospital – a decision that came as the hospital was on the verge of bankruptcy, and losing more than $1 million a month.

Under the management of HCCA, the hospital has had positive cash flow for 24 consecutive months and is positioned to provide high-quality medical care to our community for years to come.

Today, licensed for 112 acute-care beds, and employing more than 500 trained medical professionals and support staff, the hospital celebrates its 65th year of providing healthcare to the community and is positioned to meet the future health-care needs of the region.

## Past governance

The hospital district enjoyed years of growth and support, but spent the better part of the last two decades in turmoil. In the past 10 years alone, there have been at least seven Chief Executive Officers and as many Chief Financial Officers. The health-care district's Board of Directors has had an equally tumultuous history. The relationship between the Board, Administration, and doctors was continually strained. All this led to chronic instability that predictably resulted in financial losses, operational disarray, and loss of physicians.

Compare this with the leadership at other hospitals including our neighbors to the north where the CEO and CFO have been virtual fixtures for decades. At TRMC, even though there have been countless changes in Board members and CEOs, a core instability nonetheless persisted that illustrated a systemic flaw in the hospital's governance structure. Recently, the Tulare County Grand Jury came to the same conclusion.

## Community's responsibility

In addition to the tumult within the hospital, a very small group of community and non-community players continued to "stir the pot" to ensure that the turmoil continued as it served their personal agendas. In some cases, that personal agenda was for self-aggrandizement, in others it was economically driven, and yet in others it was driven by outside competitive elements that saw our hospital's extinction as serving their economic interests. Unfortunately, despite our hospital's near miraculous turnaround over the past two years, some of these same elements are continuing with their old ways by misinforming the public and the press – a strategy that brought nothing but failure and shame to our community. The most recent examples are the purported claims that the "doctors were fired," that HCCA is "buying the hospital," and that HCCA is receiving a "30% bonus over and above the employee payroll." Just for the record, all three are patently false. Here are the facts:

- The hospital board did reach agreement with a new medical staff organization, but not a single doctor was fired. All doctors have exactly the same clinical privileges they had before the change, the only difference is new physician leadership, which is dedicated to improving the quality of care. In fact, 95% of the doctors treating patients at the hospital have signed a letter supporting the change.
- HCCA is not buying the hospital nor is it contemplating such a purchase. By law, the District's assists cannot be sold by a Board decision or any other mechanism. The only way the hospital could be sold would be by a vote of the public. Even then, it would have to be at the fair market value, with 100% of the proceeds being paid to the publicly owned district.
- The 30% "bonus" funds employee benefits, including health insurance, and most certainly is not being kept by HCCA.

## Seismic requirements for hospitals

The state of California has suffered numerous earthquakes throughout its history resulting in loss of life and often complete destruction of the hospitals, which no longer can provide care following these types of events. For that reason, a law was enacted to ensure the survivability and continued operation of hospitals to provide services following earthquakes. Senate Bill 1953 mandates that all California hospitals be rebuilt to meet these new seismic guidelines. There are no exceptions.

The Tulare Regional Medical Center complex is now 65 years old, out of compliance with the state requirements and must be replaced. There is no option and we cannot negotiate our way out of compliance; neither can other hospitals in California. We must comply and we must begin immediately.

In order to complete the tower, we must ask voters for $55 million to finish job. That's an amount previous administrations and multiple boards (including the one serving in 2005 when the first GO bond was introduced) knew it needed but failed to ask for.

The original official 2005 bond documents (which are public and can be viewed by anyone) show that the tower required $120 million to complete, but voters were instead asked to approve only $85 million and led to believe that additional funds would mysteriously appear.

Looking at the audited financial statements for the past 12 years, it is inconceivable to me that anyone on the board or administration at the time or since genuinely believed that they could make up the difference. In fact, even the official 2005 bond documents very specifically state that additional GO bonds will be needed to build the tower.

Why didn't they request it then? Because the board and administration at that time believed $85 million was all voters would support. So, instead of coming to the public and laying the facts as they were, they instead spun fantastical tales of how they were going to fund the difference. When we are speaking today of another GO bond, it is not something new. We are simply bringing to the surface what was known and true 10 years ago. Had HCCA been involved in 2005, we would have simply stated the true need right up front and worked with the community to address it. This is yet another of the messes that the inexperience, chronic infighting, misdirected agendas and the multiple poor decisions of the past have left for us to fix.

## Building project

Our new tower will bring us into compliance with the state's rigid seismic requirements, and will enable TRMC to provide modern-day care to patients for years to come. Our current 65-year-old building will not be allowed to continue to serve patients. Period.

All California hospitals wishing to survive are doing what we are doing, and most communities understand they will benefit from the required upgrades. Here in Tulare County, our neighbors in Visalia are facing the same requirements. While their cost to upgrade will be far greater than ours, there is no option.

Let's consider the alternative. What if we decided that we really aren't willing to fight to keep our hospital in Tulare? What if we just allowed all of the ineptitude and anger of the past decade to permit our hospital to fade away? The health and economic consequences would be catastrophic. As our region is already short of acute care beds and short of doctors, the quality of general health care would rapidly degrade. When emergency medical conditions such as trauma, stroke and heart attacks strike, every minute counts. If patients were forced to to travel to out of town hospitals, very bad outcomes would occur.

Economically, the loss of our hospital would be devastating. More than 500 jobs would be lost. The businesses those workers support would suffer, and property values would decline. People would choose other places to live because Tulare would lack access to quality health care. The exodus from Tulare of the health-care professionals alone would be almost immediate, and we would lose the ability to attract the very people we need to make Tulare prosper. That's a gamble with our future that we should not be willing to make. To choose that path would be beyond reckless.

## What's changed

Stability. The private-public partnership that HCCA has with the Tulare Local Health Care District is unique and likely the first of its kind. In this innovative arrangement, the district's mission remains intact and its assets remain fully owned by the public, yet its operations are run like a private business. Thus, this unique arrangement ensures that it is to both parties' mutual advantage to be good stewards of the District.

HCCA has succeeded beyond what anyone had dared to hope on January 10, 2014 when it embarked on this mission. The turnaround has been dramatic and instantaneous. Every month of the last two years has seen a positive net profit. All employees received pay raises on their first day with HCCA, and they've had additional pay raises since. More jobs have been added. Compare this with past years of multi-million dollar losses, layoffs, and no raises. The hospital's financial returns from 2015 alone were three times the national average and were greater than they have been in the previous 12 years. The hospital valuation has increased by $28 million in these last two years.

## Confirmation of the change

Fitch Ratings is a national credit rating agency that rates virtually all hospitals in the United States, and many other businesses. Their valuations are used by banks and bond holders – just like a credit score is used in assessing how credit worthy an individual is. In the past two years, Fitch changed its outlook prediction for our hospital from "negative" to "stable" and followed that with another upgrade to our creditworthiness. It called TRMC's turnaround "dramatic."

In addition, we have now had two annual financial audits by an outside firm and both have unequivocally affirmed our progress, removing the "going concern" qualification and, confirmed the positive financial transformation. All these documents are available to the public for review.

## Community enhancements

Since HCCA partnered with TRMC, the county has benefited from numerous enhancements to health care:

1. Three Medical Offices were opened or expanded to full-time availability in Tulare, Lindsay and Earlimart, improving access to care in rural and underserved communities.

2. Within the hospital, HCCA has launched technologically-advanced services including stroke tele-neurology, making diagnosis and treatment faster when time counts, and a precision dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry, or DXA, a bone-density scanner that uses 1/10th the dose of radiation of a standard x-ray.

3. Our Evolutions Fitness & Wellness Center has added two infrared saunas for members that provide the benefits of a sauna at lower, more comfortable temperatures.

4. A momentous partnership with Cerner, supplier of health-information technology and provider of Community Works, will allow us to integrate all departments into a logical, easy-to-use IT system that protects our patient records and information at the highest level possible.

The strides made by HCCA in just two years are nothing short of extraordinary, but the situation will improve with stable governance and an experienced team at the helm. Together, HCCA and Tulare Regional Medical Center have the expertise, the experience and the determination to move the hospital from a tangled past to a high-quality, sustainable future that our community deserves.

*Kathleen Johnson is vice president of marketing for HCCA/Tulare Regional Medical Center.*

# Comments & Letters

## Letter: No on H

**Kraig Couture**

No on H, the $300 Million hospital tax.

Once again Kaweah Delta wants to build something new and to have the tax payers pay for it instead of getting their own loans, grants, and mortgages. Their campaign says the Hospital bond will shorten wait times in the ER and keep emergency services close to home. Really? Did they forget us tax payers just built and paid for their last new wing of the hospital which is not going to close? And can someone tell us how $300 million will shorten wait times? The only thing that will shorten wait times is a new Management team.

Kaweah Delta earned over $500 million last year and they want the tax payers to pay for their new hospital? If any of us wanted to build a new home we would need to take out a Mortgage, not have our neighbors pay for it. After paying $300 million what will we get? Will we get free care, will we get better care, NO, we will just get a tax bill for $300 million. Its time us tax payers, the ones that lost jobs, lost their homes, lost their faith in the system say no to yet another wasteful tax.

Say NO to the $300 million hospital tax

Say NO to the $300 million for new executive offices.

Say NO to the $300 million for executive bonuses

Say NO on H

## Comments

"We debated asking for more in the bond, but at $85 million it was already at the high end of what the consultant said we could pass. It is the still the most money passed by voters in this county. The project began at $105 million and we knew it would be tight. CEO Bob Montion felt the hospital should put up some money and that not all should come from the taxpayers, thus the $20 million commitment from the hospital. We also knew if we came up just short, we could shell the upper floor until money became available. More than $17 million in changes — including the helicopter pad which is a waste of money since it will only be used to send patients out — is what is to blame for the shortfall along with other mistakes, and it is the board which approved all those changes to get us where we are today. I see where some people said it was always a $120 million project, and even if that was the case, why is the hospital asking for $140 million now. Still have not seen that explained."

***— Rick Elkins** on **Grand Jury Releases "Tower of Shame" Report on Tulare Regional Medical Center***

Comment on Facebook: fb.me/ourvalleyvoice and on our website: ourvalleyvoice.com

## Murphy's Fortune

## Letter: Vote for Measure H

**Harry Tow**

Visalia is facing a critical decision with the scheduled May election for a new hospital replacing the 50-year-old existing facilities. That replacement, required by State law based on earthquake-related patient deaths in non-compliant hospital buildings, is an opportunity for this community to continue nearly a century of highest-quality medical care.

Visalia's first hospital was a converted residence just north of downtown. In 1926, the City of Visalia constructed a badly needed 55-bed municipal hospital, serving the needs of the community and the region, just west of today's hospital.

The City operated this facility until the Kaweah Delta Health Care District was formed and the District's citizens voted to support the 1960's financing and construction of today's hospital. That hospital, carefully maintained and upgraded over the past half-century, has provided to all of us a level of medical care unsurpassed in the Valley, and is utilized by nearly 450 local doctors. Together, the level of care available from these highly qualified physicians and surgeons and from the hospital's emergency and acute care facilities has been superb.

The citizen-selected continuing location of the hospital in the heart of the community and the hospital's success in providing highest-quality care has had a corollary benefit. Nearby hospital districts have struggled; some of them no longer operate hospitals. Kaweah Delta's success – its 4,000 employees, hospital patient visitors from throughout the county, and local purchasing policies – has had a major economic impact on the community.

As a long-time Visalia resident, with nearly three-quarters of a century of service in local government and as a consultant to cities and local special districts like Kaweah Delta, I'd like to offer information regarding potential concerns some members of the community may have regarding this financing proposal. This information is offered based on my belief that we all have an important interest in the continuance of highest quality medical care in our town:

The minimal increase in our tax bills for bond issue financed will be a small percentage of our local property tax. There is no other way to finance the State-required replacement of our Hospital facilities. Hospital rates and charges cannot, because of insurance and governmental requirements, be raised to this extent. A project of this magnitude simply cannot be funded by the hospital alone.

Fortunately, the hospital's credit rating is very good, and as a result bond interest costs are as low as possible.

One suggestion that has been heard is that District boundaries could be enlarged to help finance the hospital replacement costs, however this is legally, and in practice, totally unworkable. The District is surrounded by other healthcare districts and cannot be easily expanded.

The patients who are not District residents fully pay their way for hospital stays. Their families' and visitors' expenditures for meals and other purchases in town boost our local economy (especially downtown) and thus reduce our local taxes with added sales tax revenues.

The State <u>will</u> close our hospital if we do not replace the existing building, which cannot be modified to new earthquake resistant standards.

Even more critical to all of us who already live here, Visalia enjoys hospital care superior to those of other South Valley communities, and has attracted 450 quality physicians and surgeons, and 4,000 dedicated Hospital nurses and medical support people. This institution has saved the lives of our children, their grandparents and many of us who must vote "yes" to continue that same level of care. Visalia has historically, because of the commitment of its citizens, been the best town in the Valley in every way – we should not have to travel to other towns for quality medical care!

The State's facility replacement mandate is clear-cut: "replace or shut down". It offers to us, concurrently, an opportunity to support Visalia's long-term commitment to provision of the best facilities and technology essential to critical medical care. My family has been the recipient of that care; yours may have been also. I urge your support of, and "yes vote" for, the May bond election for the facilities essential to continuation of that level of medical care in our community.

Send your letters to **editor@ourvalleyvoice.com**

## Veteran's Corner

## Honor a Hero, Hire a Vet - Job/Resource Fair

**Scott Holwell**

It's Almost Here! The Kings County Veterans Employment Committee is once again hosting a Job and Resource Fair for veterans, military, National Guard, reservists, and their dependents and survivors.

This year's Fair will be held on Thursday, April 21 at West Hills College in Lemoore and will run from 9am to 2pm. The event is a rare opportunity to meet with employers who are ready to hire, and public and private agencies eager to help with training and other services. In one easy location, veterans will learn about the variety of options available to them, including career, training and education opportunities.

Whether you are a veteran seeking a new career or are looking for a first job since returning from the military, you are invited to attend. Bring copies of your resume. If you don't have one, there will be assistance available in putting one together.

Veterans possess a wide variety of outstanding qualities including experience, maturity, leadership and loyalty making them ideal candidates for job openings. Employers and resource providers can contact Luis Sandoval at (559) 585-3553 or by email at luis.sandoval@edd.ca.gov for more information. The fair is free and open to all.

The Kings County Veterans Service Office can complete the DMV Veteran Status Verification Form for the new California Veteran Designation on your driver's license. We can also issue Veteran ID cards to honorably discharged veterans. Contact Scott Holwell if you would like to receive periodic veteran's information by email.

There are many state and federal benefits and programs available to veterans and their dependents. To find out if you are eligible for any of these benefits, visit or call our office. We can and will assist you in completing all required application forms. You can get information on the Web from the Kings County Veterans Service Office webpage at www.countyofkings.com/vets.

*Scott Holwell, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Deputy Veterans Service Officer for Kings County. Send your questions to the Veterans Service Office, 1400 W. Lacey Blvd, Hanford, CA 93230; call (559)852-2669; or e-mail scott.holwell@co.kings.ca.us.*

PAID POLITICAL ADVERTISMENT

# BUILDING OUR HOSPITAL FOR OUR FUTURE

## Yes on H

## Emergency Care Close To Home

## SUPPORTERS OF A NEW HOSPITAL

VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

## DOWNTOWN VISALIANS

DOWNTOWN VISALIA PBID

## *It's time to build a hospital for our future!*

"The Visalia City Council urges all Visalians to support Kaweah Delta Hospital in their efforts. We cannot risk losing these [acute care rooms] that are so critical to the delivery of quality health care to our growing community."

**– City of Visalia - Mayor Steven Nelsen**

"Health Care is a key to a successful community and paramount in recruiting new businesses to locate in Visalia. Losing acute care beds, reducing the footprint of Kaweah Delta, and ultimately reducing overall service to our community would hurt that effort and hurt Visalia."

**Norris McElroy, Chairperson , Visalia Chamber of Commerce**

**To learn more about Measure H, visit www.FriendsofKD.com**

Paid for by Friends of Kaweah Delta Hospital, PO Box 6695, Visalia, CA 93290-6695; FPPC#: 1382663

VALLEY VOICE
# Valley Scene
7 April, 2016

## Group Wants to Bring Community Radio to Tulare County

**Dave Adalian**

A diverse group of South Valley activists and leaders wants to bring the voices of all Tulare County residents to the airwaves, but they're facing a tight deadline and need to raise cash quickly.

"We want to see a growing circle of local people from all walks of life and all political persuasions and all artistic interests and everything come together to create a truly community-based radio station," said Earl Cruser, chair of South Valley Community Media (SVCM), a two-month-old nonprofit created to take control of 99.1 on the FM dial.

South Valley Community Media board members Earl Cruser and Patricia Gallimore. Valley Voice/Dave Adalian

"We have assumed the operation of the station," Cruser said. "The frequency was originally applied for by an organization called the South Valley Peace Center. They still officially exist and own the license. Too many of the folks in that group thought it was beyond their capability."

### Two Costly Catches

But there are a couple of expensive hurdles the group must leap to reach their goal.

"One is to find a tower location," Cruser said. "We have an antenna on a tower in Corcoran. We were broadcasting for a while until our transmitter died."

With a dead transmitter on their hands anyway, the group decided it would be better to relocate the tower to Tulare County, and they're looking for a concerned citizen with lots of land to help them.

"We decided it would be best to get back on the air, preferably in the foothills east of Porterville," Cruser said, but there's a snag. "Usually, you rent on a tower. That's the standard way of doing it, but we don't have any money so we were

**RADIO** continued on **19 »**

Cello section of the Tulare County Symphony. Courtesy/Tulare County Symphony

## Symphony Closes Season with 'Desperate Housewives'

**Donna Orozco**

The Tulare County Symphony closes its 2015-16 season with two pieces by Rimsky-Korsakov on Saturday, April 9 with a concert entitled "Desperate Housewives."

Why that title?

The main piece for the evening is "Scheherazade," the fabled story of the woman who tells tantalizing tales to the Sultan every night, always leaving on a cliffhanger so he won't murder her, as he has his former wives. You might call that "desperation."

The piece features beautiful melodies by harp player Jennifer Farrenkopf. Concertmaster Susan Doering will be featured as the "voice" of Scheherazade, with a theme that reoccurs throughout the work.

The second piece is the familiar march, "Procession of the Nobles," which features the brass section.

The concert begins at 7:30pm at the Visalia Fox Theatre. Come early to hear music director Bruce Kiesling's colorful background on "Scheherazade." Tickets available at 559 732-8600 or www.tularecountysymphony.com.

The symphony is holding a drawing for everyone who buys their 2016-17 season tickets before April 9. The prize is a $350 gift certificate to the Vintage Press. Tickets must be purchased by 5pm on Friday, April 8.

## Danny Angel New Voice of Visalia Rawhide

**Nancy Vigran**

It is the nature of baseball – players, coaches, managers and even broadcasters move from one team to another, trying to better themselves in the ranks.

Such is the case with Visalia Rawhide Director of Broadcaster & Media Relations Donny Baarns, who left the end of March to take a position with Kansas City Royals Triple-A affiliate, the Omaha Stormchasers.

Baarns, who was the voice of the Rawhide for eight years--having called more than 1,000 games for the team--has been replaced with another California-native, Danny Angel.

Angel, who hails from Sonoma, is the nephew of Joe Angel, the Baltimore Orioles broadcaster.

"He was really the impetus behind my broadcast career," Danny Angel said of his uncle.

Angel would attend any game possible where his uncle was broadcasting, which included some San Francisco Giants games, close to home.

"It was like the Wizard of Oz," he said, "I got to see behind the curtain."

"I love baseball," he said, "I just love the game."

Angel played Little League, but in high school he became a rugby player.

After earning his broadcasting and media communication degree from San Francisco State University, Danny Angel has spent his last seven summers calling ball around the country including games for the Norfolk Tides, Potomac Nationals, Aberdeen IronBirds, Laredo Broncos, Edenton Steamers and the California Winter League. He was named Broadcaster of the Year in the summer collegiate Coastal Plains League in 2012 and 2013.

Danny Angel. Nancy Vigran/Valley Voice

"You are the storyteller for the team," Angel said. "You are the only avenue to the team [for the public]."

Angel admits that he was always afraid of public speaking, but is very comfortable in the broadcast booth.

"You're kind of talking to yourself," he said, "There's no one else in the room."

Perhaps his favorite stint to date was with the Edenton Steamers in North Carolina. A small town of 5,000, it is not the best singles area, Angel admitted, but he lived with a host family and enjoyed learning the history of the area and the natural environment. He stays in touch with that family, continuing to visit every time he is anywhere near the area.

But now he has landed his first year-round baseball team job back in his home state of California.

"Before it was like I was just going [away for the summer, for a temporary job]," he said, "Now it is that I have moved to Visalia."

Angel lives in a team-owned house with some of his co-workers. His move came quickly, having received an initial call from Baarns in early March. He was chosen for the Rawhide broadcaster position from a field of about a dozen candidates.

"We actually did not post this position because we would have gotten hundreds of applicants, and wanted to avoid the overload. Donny researched and selected the top 12 candidates he thought would be a good fit for what we were looking for, and we narrowed those down from there," said Rawhide General Manager Jennifer Pendergraft.

"With the season coming up so quickly, we were on a tight timeline, so the fact that Danny had all the skill-sets we were looking for, his family history in the industry, and the fact that he lived in California all worked well to his favor," she said. "After meeting him in-person, we decided that he would be a good fit with our current staff, and the rest is history."

And just as quickly, Baarns has moved to Omaha.

"Donny and I joined the Visalia staff only a year and a half apart. So I've gotten to work with Donny all of his eight years with the team and see his progression," Pendergraft said. "He's done well getting himself into the position to obtain a job at a higher level and continue to advance his career - we are incredibly proud of him for getting that opportunity!

**RAWHIDE** continued on **22 »**

# Great Conversations

## Milton and the Freedom of Speech

**Joseph R. Teller**

As Americans, we take the freedom of speech for granted, forgetting that for most of Western history, it was hotly contested and complicated value.

Recently, Great Books readers and COS faculty and students discussed John Milton's *Areopagitica*, the most extensive defense of a free press ever written in English. The discussion was led by Milton scholar Stephen Fallon, who visited COS in March as part of the college's CHAP program. Milton is one of the most important English writers who ever lived, and his 1644 treatise is a sweeping and eloquent defense of a free press, pointedly modern in its ideas, and also, in some ways, more honest than we are about the limits of free speech.

Milton argues that books are living things, and should not be subject to censorship: "For books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are…Who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image, but he who destroys a good book kills reason itself."

Readers must discern good from evil on their own by facing new and sometimes troubling ideas: "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat."

For Milton, truth is not static or unchanging, but a dynamic process, which he likens to a flowing river: "If [Truth's] waters flow not in a perpetual progression they sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition."

To avoid intellectual stagnation, readers must pursue the truth through ongoing conversation, matching arguments to arguments, weighing reasons, and making decisions about what we believe and why they believe it. Censorship would staunch this process, and Milton issues a battle-cry that sounds like it was lifted right out of early American writing: "Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties."

It is no coincidence that one of Milton's biggest eighteenth-century fans was Thomas Jefferson.

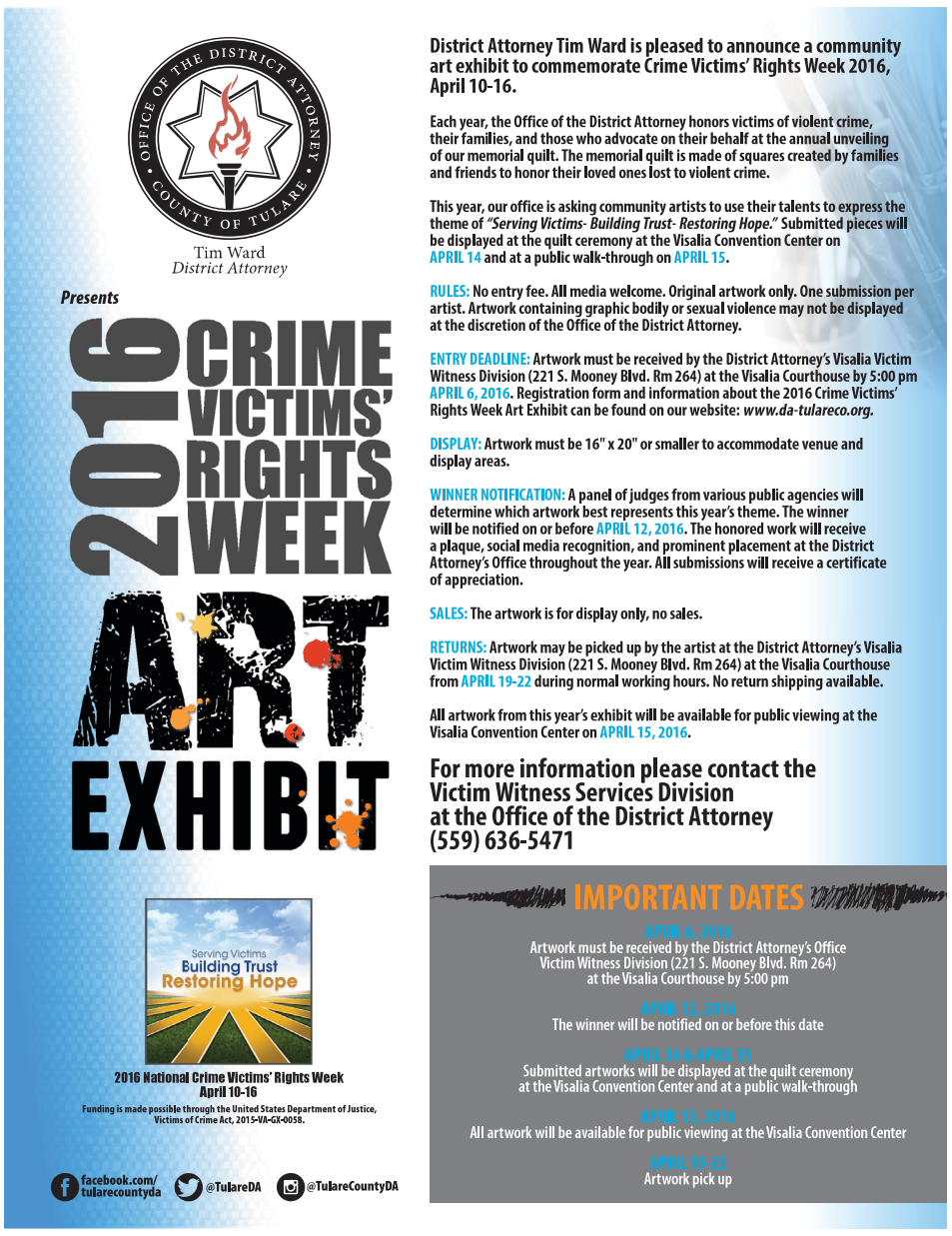
Although we sympathize with Milton's argument, we should also be attuned to the ways Milton departs from our own assumptions about freedom. He has no problem, it seems, with "punishing" bad books after they have been published: "I deny not but that is of greatest concern in the…commonwealth to have a vigilant eye how books demean themselves…and thereafter, to confine, imprison, and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors."

And though Milton is a staunch advocate of religious tolerance, there is no room in his ideal commonwealth for Roman Catholic publications, since Rome itself bans and burns books and thus stops the dynamic flow of truth-seeking. Freedom of speech, then, is not unqualified for Milton, which is unappealing to modern American readers, so different the assumption is from our own values.

Or is it? Perhaps Milton's qualifications aren't as alien to us as they might seem. After all, many readers can probably think of certain arguments they believe shouldn't be uttered publically or printed, and there are a number of examples of public figures, academics, administrators, and writers who have lost their jobs or positions because of statements or positions that offended others. Even we think some utterances should be less free than others.

Thus, Milton's *Areopagitica* inspires us to defend this most hallowed freedom at the same time that it provokes questions that we sometimes prefer to ignore: how broad is our own concept of free speech? When should this freedom be restricted, and why? Are there arguments or positions we ourselves reject out of hand without a second thought—and if so, on what grounds?

*For information on the COS Great Books program or the CHAP program, contact Dr. Joseph Teller at josepht@cos.edu*


Tim Ward
District Attorney
Presents
2016 CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK
ART EXHIBIT
Serving Victims
Building Trust
Restoring Hope
2016 National Crime Victims' Rights Week
April 10-16
Funding is made possible through the United States Department of Justice, Victims of Crime Act, 2015-VA-GX-0058.
facebook.com/tularecountyda
@TulareDA
@TulareCountyDA
District Attorney Tim Ward is pleased to announce a community art exhibit to commemorate Crime Victims' Rights Week 2016, April 10-16.
Each year, the Office of the District Attorney honors victims of violent crime, their families, and those who advocate on their behalf at the annual unveiling of our memorial quilt. The memorial quilt is made of squares created by families and friends to honor their loved ones lost to violent crime.
This year, our office is asking community artists to use their talents to express the theme of "Serving Victims- Building Trust- Restoring Hope." Submitted pieces will be displayed at the quilt ceremony at the Visalia Convention Center on APRIL 14 and at a public walk-through on APRIL 15.
RULES: No entry fee. All media welcome. Original artwork only. One submission per artist. Artwork containing graphic bodily or sexual violence may not be displayed at the discretion of the Office of the District Attorney.
ENTRY DEADLINE: Artwork must be received by the District Attorney's Visalia Victim Witness Division (221 S. Mooney Blvd. Rm 264) at the Visalia Courthouse by 5:00 pm APRIL 6, 2016. Registration form and information about the 2016 Crime Victims' Rights Week Art Exhibit can be found on our website: www.da-tulareco.org.
DISPLAY: Artwork must be 16" x 20" or smaller to accommodate venue and display areas.
WINNER NOTIFICATION: A panel of judges from various public agencies will determine which artwork best represents this year's theme. The winner will be notified on or before APRIL 12, 2016. The honored work will receive a plaque, social media recognition, and prominent placement at the District Attorney's Office throughout the year. All submissions will receive a certificate of appreciation.
SALES: The artwork is for display only, no sales.
RETURNS: Artwork may be picked up by the artist at the District Attorney's Visalia Victim Witness Division (221 S. Mooney Blvd. Rm 264) at the Visalia Courthouse from APRIL 19-22 during normal working hours. No return shipping available.
All artwork from this year's exhibit will be available for public viewing at the Visalia Convention Center on APRIL 15, 2016.
For more information please contact the Victim Witness Services Division at the Office of the District Attorney (559) 636-5471
IMPORTANT DATES
APRIL 6, 2016
Artwork must be received by the District Attorney's Office Victim Witness Division (221 S. Mooney Blvd. Rm 264) at the Visalia Courthouse by 5:00 pm
APRIL 12, 2016
The winner will be notified on or before this date
APRIL 14 & APRIL 15
Submitted artworks will be displayed at the quilt ceremony at the Visalia Convention Center and at a public walk-through
APRIL 15, 2016
All artwork will be available for public viewing at the Visalia Convention Center
APRIL 19-22
Artwork pick up

## District Attorney's Office to Host Community Art Exhibit

**Staff Reports**

District Attorney Tim Ward has announced that his office will host a community art exhibit in conjunction with National Crime Victims' Rights Week to be observed April 10-16, 2016. The exhibit will reflect this year's theme of "Serving Victims – Building Trust – Restoring Hope."

The exhibit will be open to the public on April 15, 2016 from 10 am to 7 pm at the Visalia Convention Center. On display will be memorial quilts that are created by family and friends of victims of crime and art projects by community victim service organizations.

The piece that best reflects the theme will be considered by a panel and awarded a plaque to be presented at the District Attorney's annual memorial quilt unveiling the night prior to the opening of the exhibit.

"Healing comes in many forms, and one of the many ways victims of crime heal is through artistic expression," said Ward. "I'm excited that Tulare County's vibrant arts community has the opportunity to help these victims heal and move on with the support of their family, friends, and neighbors."

For more information on the District Attorney's art exhibit and National Crime Victims' Rights Week, contact the District Attorney's Victim Services Division at 636-5471 or visit www.da-tulareco.org.

On Facebook at facebook.com/ourvalleyvoice

# Radio

Continued from p. 1

hoping to find a farmer or somebody with land who'd let us build an antenna on their property."

Once they find a home for their antenna, they'll still have another gap to clear.

"The other challenge is our little transmitter died," Cruser said. "We need a new transmitter, which is a minimum of five grand. We're using the nonprofit arm of IndieGoGo for a crowd-funding effort."

Anyone interested in helping with a cash contribution can find SVCM's donations page at https://www.generosity.com/community-fundraising/non-commercial-community-radio--2. The group's homepage is www.kpsv.org. Other volunteers are needed, and eventually content producers, if the group can get back its wave back into the ether.

### Tick-Tock!

Unfortunately, the clock is ticking for KPSV, and they need to start broadcasting again or sign off for good.

"The goal is really to get on the air. We need bucks and we need them fast," Cruser said. "We have a deadline of the middle of May. If we're not on the air, we lose the license."

Imposing the deadline is the FCC, which Cruser said has done all it can to help them reach their goal. They need $10,000, and they need it right away.

"I don't think there's any avoiding that fact," he said. "If we don't' raise $10,000 maybe more in the next month, we're out of business. We've gotten extensions and all kinds of latitude from the FCC. I think they've cut all of the slack they can."

Joining Cruser on the SVCM board are Merrily Davis, Don Manro and Patricia Gallimore, Brian Newton, Carla Gerritsma, who also serves as executive director for the land conservancy group Wild Places, C-SET executive director Mary Escarsega-Fechner and Clay Leander, a consultant with Common Frequency, a group that helps local groups get community stations on the air.

### True Community Radio

What they've imagined is something like the model used by Pacifica Radio, which broadcasts locally on KFCF 88.1 FM, yet has even more input from local listeners and content producers. It will also have no set agenda.

"They (Pacifica) have all kinds of music and interview shows produced by locals. We don't want any content coming from other producers," said Cruser. "It may take a while to do that. We need to have the production facilities to do that."

In recent years, Pacifica faced a hostile takeover from outside its membership ranks. SVCM aims to avoid that with a different model of governance.

"The corporation is set up to be a membership corporation," Cruser said. "A third of the board is elected by the members. That's something you don't find in other community radio."

"South Valley Community Media board members Earl Cruser and Patricia Gallimore raise funds for a new transmitter and tower site for KPSV, a new community radio station trying to get on the air in Tulare County. The group needs to raise $10,000 by mid-May to avoid losing its broadcast license."

The March on Main against child abuse that was held on Main Street on March 26.

# April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

Maybe you attended the March Against Child Abuse on Visalia's Main Street on March 26 where participants each wore a handprint with the name and age of a local child who is in the court system because they have been abused.

Maybe you have walked through The Lisa Project in the several times it has been brought to town. The exhibit is a multi-sensory experience where you walk room to room to hear stories of abuse and neglect. In the first room you hear the 911 call that the real Lisa made in tears and anguish, about her mother and her mother's boyfriend screaming over a three-week infant. The next room is pretty and pink, belonging to a well-to-do teenager who describes being physically and emotionally abused. Then there's the room that's in upheaval and filthy, with a boy telling how he sleeps on the floor with substance abuse around him.

"People don't want to talk about child abuse," said Billie Shawl, executive director of the Tulare County Child Abuse Council (CAPC). "People protect the perpetrators and forget the victims. Five children die every day in the US due to child abuse. People think there isn't anything they can do, but there is a lot they can do. First we can change our thinking and know that we are responsible for all children. If we see abuse and neglect, we need to speak up."

Now CAPC has been licensed for the next five years to take The Lisa Project to various sites throughout eight counties in the central and south valleys. That will include every high school in Tulare County.

If you want to see The Lisa Project or have your organization host it, contact Shawl at the CAPC office, (559) 735-0456.

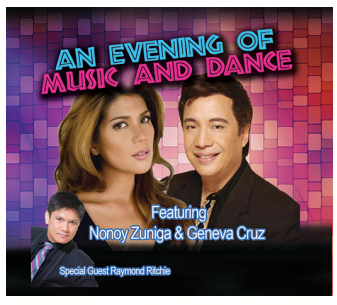
What's happening during Child Abuse Prevention Month:

- April 27—International Denim Day at Woodlake High School to raise awareness against rape and sexual assault
- April 28—Dedication of the Sofia Bench in Farmersville to proclaim Farmersville a "Community for Child Well Being" to commemorate the death of a local toddler due to child abuse

For a list of 5 Things You Can Do To Prevent Child Abuse, go to www.tularecountycapc.org/info.html


What's Happening at
TACHI PALACE HOTEL & CASINO

ARRIBA EL NORTE
SUNDAY, APRIL 17TH
Doors Open at 5PM • Showtime at 6PM
Located in the Bingo Hall
Tickets Starting at - $35
*Domingo 17 De Abril - Salon De Bingo / Bingo Hall*
*Puertas Abren 5PM • Concierto 6PM*
*El Salón de Baile Tiene Asientos Limitados / Admisión General Solamente*
**No Hay Descuentos*




AN EVENING OF MUSIC & DANCE
THURSDAY, APRIL 21TH
Showtime at 7:30PM
Located in the Bingo Hall
Tickets Starting at - $20, $30, $50

$50,000 RACING ROADSTERS
Grand Prize Drawing on Wednesday, May 11th One lucky winner will win a 2016 Mazda Miata.
APRIL 4 THROUGH MAY 11
Our Gaming Floor and Table Games are for guests 21 years and older.
Bingo players must be 18 years and older.
TACHI PALACE Hotel & Casino
TACHIPALACE.COM • 866-4PALACE • LEMOORE, CA

Kaweah Delta Guild Presents:
Jewelry Sale
By Masquerade
$5
Monday, April 11
7 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Tuesday, April 12
6:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
KAWEAH DELTA
MINERAL KING WING LOBBY
400 W. MINERAL KING
VISALIA, CA 93291
All profits purchase patient care equipment for Kaweah Delta Health Care District.
Kaweah Delta Health Care District Guild
A division of Kaweah Delta Health Care District
For more information, contact:
Donna at 734-3109

# Calendar

**Mondays: Bridge Club, 9:30am-2pm**
210 W Center Street Visalia, CA 93291**.** Admission is free. For additional information call: Joan Dinwiddie @ 732-0855

**Mondays: Knitters, 10am-12:30pm**
210 W Center Street Visalia, CA 93291**.** Everyone is welcome.

**Fridays: Women's Morning Bible Study, 9am-Noon**
210 W Center Street Visalia, CA 93291. For additional information call: 739-9010

**Saturdays: Cup of Jazz, 10am-Noon**
At Cafe 210, at 210 Center street, Visalia. Free. Led by Richard Garoogian. Call 559.730.0910 for more information.

**2nd Tuesday, Monthly: Yappy Hour, 5-9pm**
Well-mannered, leashed pets are welcome on the patio at the Planing Mill Artisan Pizzeria, 514 East Main Street, Suite A, in Visalia. A portion of the proceeds is donated to the Valley Oak SPCA. For more information, call 651-1111.

**3rd Tuesday, Monthly: League of Women Voters Meeting, 11:45am**
At Sue Sa's Club House, 699 W. Center in Visalia. Reservations are required and the public is welcome. Contact Newellgb@hotmail.com or call 732-1251.

**1st Wednesday, Monthly through June 8: South Valley Guitar Society Meeting, 7-8:30pm**
All acoustic musicians and music lovers are welcome to join at 1849 E. Tulare Rd. in Lindsay. The more styles of music, the better. A featured performer each month during the first half of the meeting. During the second, anyone is welcome to play. Share a song or simply enjoy the music. Bring snack to share. Every first Wednesday of the month through June 8. For more information, call **559-303-3943.**

**1st Thursday Monthly through October: Diabetes Support Group, 5:30-7pm**
Kaweah Delta Health Care District will offer a free diabetes support group through October from on the first Thursday of the month at the Kaweah Delta Chronic Disease Management Center, 325 Willis St., Visalia. Information: 624-2416.

**1st Thursday, Monthly: Veterans Support Group, 5:30-7pm**
Free support group for global war on terrorism & post 9-11 (Veterans Only) at the Tulare Public Library, 475 North M Street in Tulare. Facilitated by: Dr. Lance Zimmerman, Ph.D of veterans Counseling Clinic. "The transition from serving in a combat zone to civilian life can be a difficult one. Combat veterans commonly experience feelings of depression, isolation, alienation, guilt, anxiety, and anger following their service. If you're experiencing these or any other emotional problems after serving in a combat zone, it's vital to seek professional help. " -Veterans Counseling Clinic.

**3rd Thursday Monthly through October: Diabetes Support Group, 5:30-7pm**
Kaweah Delta Health Care District will offer a free diabetes support group through October on the third Thursday of the month at Woodlake Manor Apartments, 200 E. Sierra Avenue ,Woodlake. Information: 624-2416.

**3rd Thursday, Monthly: Gathering At the Oval, 12:30-1pm**
Lifting up the needs and concerns of Visalia through individual prayer and meditation at Oval Park, 808 North Court Street in Visalia. For more information, call 967-4065.

**3rd Thursday, Monthly: Board Game Night, 6-7:45pm**
For ages 10+ at the Visalia Branch Library, 200 West Oak Street. Sign-ups are not required. For more information, call 713-2703.

**3rd Thursday, Monthly: Ladies' Night, 6-10pm**
At the Clay Cafe in Visalia, 1018 E. Mineral King Ave. $10 studio fee with ceramic purchase. Includes complimentary margarita, dinner and dessert. Door prizes too! Reservations required: 733-2022

**1st and 3rd Thursdays, Monthly: Central Valley Tea Party Meetings, 6pm**
819 West Visalia Road, Farmersville.

**Last Thursday Monthly through October: Diabetes Support Group, 5:30-7pm**
Kaweah Delta Health Care District will offer a free diabetes support group through October on the last Thursday of the month at Sand Creek Apartments, 41020 Rd. 124, Orosi. Information: 624-2416.

**Every Thursday in April: Back Country Backpacking, 7:45-9pm**
Have you ever wanted to take an extended trip to the Sierra, but weren't sure what to bring or where to go? This class, in College of the Sequoias, San Joaquin Building, Room 1, will teach you what to bring, how to prepare and the best places to visit for your interests. Dr. Tom Lionvale instructs this course, all about fun and will be capped off by a 3-day weekend in the Sierra to let you apply what you learned. Although designed for the inexperienced, those with moderate experience have commented that the course was valuable and fun. Youth ages 10-17 are welcome to take the class, as long as they are accompanied by an adult. The trip is May 6,7 and 8. Cost is $100. For more information, call Dr. Lionvale at 733-7442.

**April 5th – May 10th (Every Tuesday for 6 weeks 10am -12:30pm)**
**July 12th – August 16th (Every Tuesday for 6 weeks 10am – 12:30pm)**
**October 4th – November 8th (Every Tuesday for 6 weeks 10am – 12:30pm)**
If you would like to learn how to better manage your health, sign up for a free six-week workshop presented by Kaweah Delta Health Care District. The workshop is designed to help people with ongoing health problems such as diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, asthma, or any other chronic condition. Class size is typically around 12-18 participants. Each session lasts 2 ½ hours. Topics that are covered include: dealing with difficult emotions, managing symptoms, goal setting, problem solving, nutrition, understanding medications, making informed treatment decisions, and increasing strength and stamina through better fitness.

This workshop was developed by Dr. Kate Lorig at Stanford University. Participants demonstrate significant improvements in the areas covered. They also report fewer hospitalizations and outpatient visits. The Empowerment for Better Living CDSMP workshops will be offered on a quarterly basis at the newly opened Chronic Disease Management Center located at 325 Willis Street in Visalia.

**May 7, June 4: Visalia Music School Open Mic, 7-9:30pm**
Bring your Instrument. We do have drums, mic, PA System and extra guitars. We want to watch and hear you perform. 4,000 square feet of musical fun. We will be in the Performance Hall at 2332 W Whitendale Avenue, Suite A, B, & C. $5.00 at the door, Pizza and Soda for small fee. Call (559) 627-9500 for more Info.

## APRIL

**April 7: 5th Annual Downtown Visalia Wine Walk, 5:30-8:30pm**
Sponsored by Chelsea Street Boutique and Central Valley Community Bank. This is a wonderful opportunity to gather your friends, enjoy the fantastic hospitality from our downtown merchants and discover your new favorite winery. Your purchase includes:
a commemorative 2016 wine glass; ticket to taste wines in 30 of our participating downtown merchant locations over the course of the evening; flavorful California and Artisan cheeses, Stafford Chocolates and Bari Infused Olive Oils will be paired with the wines and other creative appetizers will be served. Listen to live music by AC Myles while enjoying your stroll around downtown. You may purchase your tickets with a Visa, Master Card, American Express or PayPal online at www.downtownvisalia.com or by calling 559.732.7737. Our Downtown Visalians office is located at 119 S. Church Street, between Main and Acequia. Tickets are $35 before March 27 and $40 after. You must be 21 to participate in the tastings. Wine glasses, wristbands and tickets will be available the day of the event at the Fox Theateron Main Street. For more information, visit www.Downtown-Visalia.com or call 559.732.7737.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**April 7: College of the Sequoia's Cultural Historical Awareness Program (CHAP), 7pm**
Speaking on George Washington and Alexander Hamilton, with Professor Stephen F. Knott, at the COS Visalia campus Ponderosa Lecture Hall. For more information on these and other events, contact COS Public Information (publicinfo@cos.edu).

**April 8-10: 43rd annual Jazz Affair**
$95.00 for 3 day badge. Children 1/2 price. Daily badges available. 4 sites with free bus service between sites.

High Sierra Jazz Band is the Host band. Others are Au Brothers, Blue Street, Bob Dragga, Cornet Chop Suey, Flip Oakes Quartet, Grand Dominion, High Street, Kylie Castro, Jerry Krahn Quartet, Night Blooming Jazzmen, Reedly River Rats, Sonny Leyland trio, Titan Hot Seven, Tom Rigney & Flambeau. For more information call Rusty Crain 559-561-4549 or Betty Wood 559-561-4030 or Stan Huddleston 559-561-3321

**April 9: Barks and Bourbon, 5:30-10pm**
A Speakeasy event to benefit Tulare Animal Services. Hors d'oeuvres, bourbon tasting, no-host bar, silent and live auctions, cigars, wine and 20's cos-


sher Passover 2016
from
ation Beit Shalom
y Rabbi Avivah Erlick
Vandendorp on Guitar
Invited to Join Us
y, April 22nd @ 7 pm
the Traditional Story & Songs
ludes Salmon w/ Dill Creme Sauce
Matzah Ball Soup Green Bean Casserole
aramelized Carrots Onion Potatoes
odas, Waters, Wine, Juice & Coffee
Seder Plates with All Symbolic Foods
ts $10 Children 6-17 No Charge 5 & Under
e. Visalia. Corner of Court & Paseo Av.
ons: 559 308-1333 or 734-0140

tume contest--all at the International Agri-Center Heritage Complex, 4500 South Laspina St. in Tulare. For more information call 303-6930.

**April 9: Local Music Revolution First Year Anniversary Show, 8pm-2am**
Barmageddon--126 East Kern Ave. in Tulare--hosts a live music podcast. Tickest for the 21+ show are $5 in advance, and $7 at the door.

**April 13-16: School House Rock**
The TCOE Theatre Company presents its spring musical, "School House Rock Jr. Live" at El Diamante High School theater, 5100 West Whitendale in Visalia. For more information call 651-1482.

**April 13: 50+ Rocks Spring Open House & BBQ, 10am-2pm**
A fun barbecue at the Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St. Come learn about exciting new programs and fun activities for adults ages 55 and better! Enjoy a BBQ lunch, entertainment, class exhibitions, door prizes, information booths and learn about services for our senior community. Vendors providing programs and services for Visalia?s 50+ populations are invited to submit a booth application for this event. Space is limited and early registration is encouraged. For more information or to reserve a booth at the event, call the Visalia Senior Center at (559) 713-4381.

**April 13: Sound Alliance and Vocal Union, 7pm**
Sound Alliance and Vocal Union, a musical group from Brigham Young University-Idaho, will be performing at the Visalia Fox Theater. This talented university group combines authentic jazz and Swing Era music with the tight harmonies of vocal jazz to create an entertaining and inspiring musical experience for all ages. Free for youth 17 and under; attendees 18 and up suggested donation of $5 at the door. Net proceeds donated to the Visalia Rescue Mission.

**April 14: Throwback Thursday--Classic Flicks at the Fox, 7pm**
On the second Wednesday monthly through April, 2016, the Visalia Fox Theatre presents a classic film. Admission is $5 and includes a small popcorn. Tonight: Amadeus, 1984.

**April 14: College of the Sequoia's Cultural Historical Awareness Program (CHAP), 7-9pm**
Freedom as inspired by Chicano literature, with author Daniel Chacon, at the COS Visalia campus Ponderosa Lecture Hall. For more information on these and other events, contact COS Public Information (publicinfo@cos.edu).

**April 15: California Antique Farm Equipment Show**
Antique displays, swap meet, shopping, food, beer and live entertainment--all at the International Agri-Center, 4450 South Laspina St. in Tulare. For more information call 688-1030.

**April 16-24: Free Entrance to Your National Parks**
National Park Week (all national parks)

**April 16: Walk A Dog A Thon supporting Valley Oak SPCA, 8am-Noon**
Fun for all ages at Plaza Park in Visalia featuring: 3 mile walk; Canine contests and prizes; Vendors; Raffle; Blessing of the animals. Minimum donation for Walk participants: $25.00 per person. Awards for the top fundraisers in Youth, Teen, Adult, Senior and Team categories. For more information, call 651-1111 ext 6.

**April 16: Trail Horse Challenge Clinic, 10am**
Teaching riders how to compete or just be better partners with their horse working obstacles they will find on the trail. Open to all breeds of horses and all experience of riders. They can bring their own horse or lease one of mine. For more info call 559-561-4268. All events take place at Wood N Horse Training Stables, 42846 North Fork Dr, Three Rivers.

**April 16: Rib Cook-off, 10am-6pm**
Exeter Eagles, 555 W. Visalia Rd., presents its 2nd Annual Rib Cook-off. There will be a live band, vendors, and more! For more information, call (559) 592-1771.

**April 16: Lindsay Orange Blossom Festival, 10am**
A parade begins at 10am just before the festival in the City Park. A free family event with a volleyball tournament, 5k/10k run, horseshoe throwing contest, bake off and pancake breakfast. For more information visit lindsayorangeblossom.org

**April 17: Freddie Weber Music Workshop, 1pm**
Award-winning performer, singer/songwriter and author, will present a music workshop based on her new book, "God So Loved the World, He Gave His Only Begotten Son, And Now—It's You!", at the Center for Spiritual Living, 117 S. Locust, Visalia (one block south of Main). $20. 559 625-2441 or www.cslvisalia.org

**April 23: 2016 Earth Day Festival, 10am-2pm**
The Visalia Environmental Committee, Natural Resource Conservation and Parks & Urban Forestry Division are hosting the 2016 Earth Day Celebration on Saturday, April 23rd, from 10am to 2pm at the St. John's Riverwalk Park at Ben Maddox and the St. Johns River. This year's event will focus on sustainability, conservation, and energy efficiency and will include live music, exhibitors, vendors, food booths, and multiple demonstration workshops. Visalia Transit is offering **FREE** rides on April 23rd on all Visalia Transit Fixed Routes. Routes operate throughout the Cities of Visalia, Farmersville, Exeter, and Goshen. If you are planning on attending this year's Earth Day celebration, consider hopping on Route 8A which will deliver you at the corner of St. Johns Parkway and Ben Maddox, adjacent to the Earth Day festival. If you would like some assistance planning your transit trip, please call the Greenline at 1-877-404-6473 or visit Visalia.city/vtschedule.

**April 24: Grand Re-opening of the Main Street Exhibit,10am-3pm**
The Tulare County Museum in Mooney Grove Park will be celebrating the Grand Re-opening of the Main Street Exhibit. Exhibits have been refurbished, food will be available for purchase, and there will be a number of interactive displays and groups that will be great fun for all. For more information contact: Amy King, Tulare County. Museum Curator 559 733 6616 or aking1@co.tulare.ca.us.

**April 26: Exercise & You Lecture Series at The Lifestyle Center, 6-7pm**
The Lifestyle Center (TLC) invites the community to attend FREE informative lecture series presented by TLC Exercise Physiology Staff. Lectures are from 6:00pm to 7:00pm at TLC conference room located 5105 W. Cypress Ave in Visalia. Please review the following dates and topics and join us. Tonight: The Special "OPS" of Fitness Training: Overload, Progression, and Specificity, presented by: Mark Epstein, MA, CSCS

# Sports

## Mt. Whitney Softball Looking to Improve in League Play

**Stefan Barros**

The Mt. Whitney Softball program has had its struggles over the years, but Head Coach Scott Haagensen is trying to turn it around. Mt. Whitney already has six wins in the 2016 campaign, and Haagensen's goal for this season is to surpass the three wins the team had in West Yosemite League play last season.

"It is the progress I wanted to see coming off of last season. Before last season, the girls had only won one league game in the previous three seasons, and we had three last season. We came in better this year. We have a transfer from Redwood, Savanah White, she really adds to the potential of this team, but this is a rebuilding process. I can't remember the last winning season that Mt Whitney had, so we just want to surpass last year's win total."

So far as the structure of the roster is concerned, it is one that is looking beyond this year according to Haagensen, with few seniors on the 2016 team.

"We're built for the future. We have four seniors on a roster of 15, but our Co-MVP from last year was a freshman [Kaitlyn Coffman]. She led the league in home runs, and had twice as many home runs as anyone else in the league. She has already verbally committed to Ohio State. Our Junior Varsity program is almost made up entirely of freshmen, and they have been very successful."

When it comes to leaders on the team, Haagensen looks to a couple of experienced players, as well some younger players who have excelled as well.

"Kaitlyn Coffman, who is now a sophomore, plays some shortstop; Elizabeth Torosian, is a catcher going to Fresno State; Cortni Cunningham is a junior. They are our captains and our inspirational leaders, and all have the ability to continue at the next level."

As a coach, Haagensen tries to impart some wisdom unto his players, and, believing a strong work ethic begins at practice, he demands his players take practicing seriously.

"'Play the way I practice,' is a motto I like to use. If you goof off at practice, you'll goof off in games. This is an equal opportunity program, not an equal playing time program. You have to be dedicated and you have to be disciplined."

Haagensen elaborated on the discipline he wants from his players, and how he sticks to his own coaching ethics.

"In our last game I had to sit down our pitcher before the game. Sometimes I believe I'm a little too ethical, but if a pitcher doesn't show up, they don't play."

Haagensen also talked about what he tries to do as coach to build chemistry for his team.

"We have team dinners every week, and our players really do get along with each other," he said.

Haagensen continued to discuss the immediate future of Mt. Whitney softball and his aspirations for the rest of this 2016 season.

"We are in Division Four now, so the realistic expectation is to make the playoffs. We want to exceed our win total from last year. We want to at least split our league games, because that allows us to make the playoffs."

As of April 1, the Pioneers held a 6-11 record. They will play their next game on April 7 at Lemoore High School. Game time will be 4:30pm.

## Rawhide

Continued from p. 1

"He left a large fingerprint on the Visalia organization by organizing all of the Club's history, which had never been done before him. That took a lot of effort, research and late nights at the library. The book that he wrote, Goshen & Giddings, is a gem and we look forward to working with Donny on more similar projects like that in the future. Donny will always be a part of the 'Rawhide Family.'"

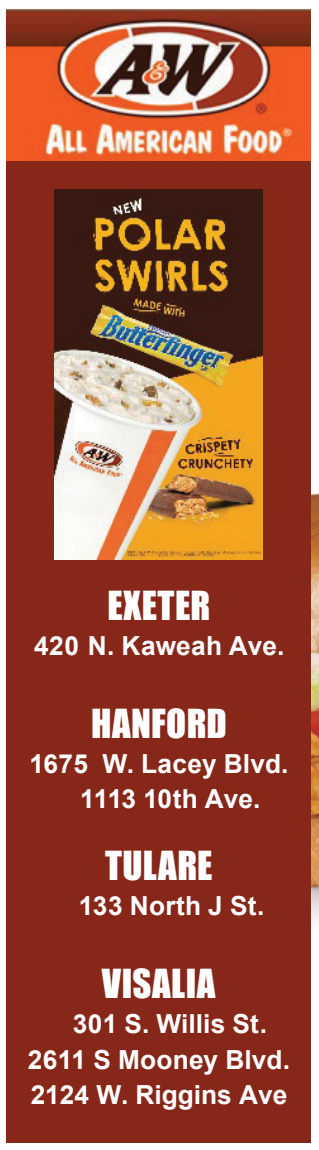
This year, marks the 70th anniversary of professional baseball in Visalia and it is sure to bring a lot of interesting fan opportunities.

California League Coach of the Year, JR House, returns for his second year at the Rawhide helm. He led the Rawhide to an 86-54 regular season record last year, during which the team won both halves in the North Division.

The Rawhide will seek its fourth consecutive playoff appearance after advancing to at least the League semi-finals in each of the past three seasons.

The Rawhide's first game is in Bakersfield on Thursday, April 7 at 7:15pm. Opening Day at the home park is Thursday, April 14 against Bakersfield at 7pm. All home games and some Bakersfield games will be announced by Angel on podcast.

Visit http://www.milb.com/index.jsp?sid=t516 for more information. For tickets, visit the box office at 300 N. Giddings or call, (559) 732-HIDE (4433).



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# Strathmore Boys & Girls Club Goes Snowboarding at China Peak

Spring break was a much needed reprieve for both kids and teachers. Even though they were not in the classroom, 16 club members attending Strathmore's Boys & Girls Clubs of the Sequoias (BGCS) still had a lesson to learn over spring break.

Club members woke up far earlier than many of their peers to take a trip to China Peak Mountain Resort. The goal of the trip was to provide the kids with a lesson on snowboarding. For many, it was their first time traveling to China Peak as well as their first time on a board. Brothers Cristian and Joaquin Avalos were lucky enough to share in the experience.

"The best part was getting to try by yourself, without the instructor," said younger brother Cristian. Joaquin enjoyed the challenge of learning the "skills" of making turns while speeding down the hill.

According to BGCS Operations Director Carri Chambers, "One of the goals of this organization is to provide meaningful experiences for our club members," she went on to say, "We feel that if you try it as a kid, you're more willing to try it as an adult."

After arriving, the kids were provided all the gear necessary to safely shred the slopes. The group gathered together and was given an hour-long private lesson on the basics of snowboarding. However, before moving on to the more advanced hills, the kids took a break to devour a delicious lunch of chips and burgers.

Given that this was their first time snowboarding, club members refrained from testing out the lifts and instead opted to stick with the more advanced bunny hills.

"The most difficult part was trying to keep your balance. But by the end I had the hang of it," shared 10-year-old Clarissa Ceballos. She went onto say that the trip was by far the best part of her spring break.

Club members who attended the trip were not only provided the opportunity to try something new, they were also left with a lasting memory. Despite an unexpected sun burn, Angelin Manzo was thrilled to share the story of her spring break adventure.

"I was happy I went with the Boys & Girls Club and I had a lot of fun," beamed Manzo.

# Thursday Night Marketplace in Hanford

**Staff Reports**

Main Street Hanford presents the 16th Annual Thursday Night Market Place with this year's theme, "The Place to Be" every Thursday for 22 weeks, starting May 5th through September 29th from 5:30-9pm.

Thursday Night Market Place is a weekly celebration in downtown Hanford featuring a Certified Farmers' Market with a large variety of farm fresh produce including peaches, strawberries, blueberries, cherries, grapes, tomatoes, squash, onions and spinach. Enjoy the many food vendors with delicious treats to tempt your taste buds including pulled pork sandwiches, roasted corn on the cob, pizza, funnel cakes with luscious strawberries and tri-tip sandwiches. There will be pony rides, bounce houses for the kids and as always great, live musical entertainment.

There is something for everyone with a special theme every Thursday including Beach Party Night, Paint Downtown Pink, celebrating breast cancer awareness, Firefighters' Appreciation Night and the always popular NASL Appreciation Night. Downtown Hanford is the place to be on Thursday nights from 5:30 to 9pm. Make sure to check out the entertainment schedule online at www.mainstreethanford.com or like Main Street Hanford on Facebook so you won't miss a minute of the fun.

Main Street Hanford is the leader and coordinator for the continued revitalization of downtown Hanford. As a certified California Main Street community, members of the organization and numerous volunteers work to bring quality events to Hanford to promote downtown as the heart and soul of the city.

For more information, call 559-582-9457.

Sierra Traditional Jazz Club presents
43rd Annual
Jazzaffair 2016
Friday April 8th
Saturday April 9th
Sunday April 10th
For Our Central Valley Families
Spend-the-Day Special "Jazz for the Generations"
Bring your children (13 - 80 yrs) half price
(12 yrs and under FREE when accompanied by an adult)
Friday, April 8 ($25), Saturday, April 9 ($45)
Sunday, April 10 ($25)
Drive up to beautiful Three Rivers
for a FUN Family outing!
Enjoy the wildflowers, the redbud, the lake
and the dazzling, roaring Kaweah River,
not to mention the best
Dixieland Jazz in the world!
11 Bands • 4 Venues • Free Shuttle • Food at all Venues
Host Band - High Sierra Jazz Band
www.jazzaffair.info

# Fallen Air Force Pilot's Photography in Tulare

**Staff Reports**

"Luc Captures a Legacy," a collection of dynamic photographs by the late Major Lucas Gruenther, USAF, opens in the Tulare Historical Museum Audio-Visual Room on Friday, April 8 from 5-7pm.

Gruenther was the grandson of Tulare Olympian Bob Mathias.

The Twain Harte native captured the love of life, nature and humanity through his dynamic photography. Gruenther, an Air Force F-16 Viper pilot, lost his life in a night training mission over the Adriatic Sea in Italy in January of 2013. He was 32 years old. His legacy continues within his amazing photographs and his beautiful daughter, Serene, who was born 10 days after his tragic death.

In honor of both Gruenther and Mathias, the show will be held through July 9. All proceeds benefit the Major Lucas Gruenther Legacy Foundation, formed to provide scholarships to exceptional individuals who embody Gruenther's spirit and love for life. By supporting his legacy foundation, show visitors help ensure that Luc and how he lived is never forgotten.

"We are pleased that the MLGL Foundation chose to hold their exhibit here, in honor of both Major Gruenther and Bob," said Chris Harrell, museum executive director and curator.

The reception is open to the public and free of charge. The exhibit will be on display through July 9. Museum hours are Thursday, Friday and Saturday 10am-4pm and the third Sunday of the month from 12:30-4pm. The Museum is located at 444 W. Tulare Ave. in Tulare.

For more information on the show and Foundation, visit www.Lucan-Gruenther.com

Lucas Gruenther

"Mountain Refuge," by Lucas Gruenther

"Lauterbrunnen River," by Lucas Gruenther